

## **Africa, Historicism and Historical Dynamics: Need for Affirmative Action in Postcolonial Africa**

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### **Abstract**

*Africa is arguably the most battered and the most misrepresented continent in the world; slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism and continuous stereotyping its people. African civilization is dynamic – language, socio-political structure, architecture, religion, art, philosophy and ethics, technology and economy etc. – and has been part of the human march to progress. Using historical analysis, the paper interrogates Africa's experiences through historical trajectory and examines how to harness its potentials for future greatness; for continuous shining of the inextinguishable African light on the Mainland and in the Diaspora. The study demonstrates that historical defeat is a menace that a people can turn into a success through the lessons of history. The paper calls for jettisoning historicism, reemphasises Africa's immense contributions to civilization and provides a glimpse into the future of its greatness. Looking beyond the centuries of subjugation and dehumanization, the grandeur of African past and its resistance to subjugation and exploitation demonstrate a culture of struggle and resilience. The various discoveries and inventions by Africans show the undying African spirit. Contemporary Pan-Africanism is to Africanise globalization, celebrate African achievements and create – Innovate Africa! The thesis of the paper is that a distinctive African personality is required to achieve African renaissance – a cultural rebirth geared toward African technological development.*

*Keywords: African personality, renaissance, technology, historical dynamics, civilization*

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## Introduction

The demand in the 1970s for a new international economic order, Harry Johnson (1976) argued, is to an important extent a demand for greater power for international bureaucrats, disguised as a demand for justice for the ordinary people of the developing countries. In his exposition on accumulation of surplus, Johnson pointed out the fundamental problem in economic philosophy as the rights of property and justification for them. So, developing countries have merely used the rhetoric of colonialism, imperialism, and dependence - past policies of the developed countries - to cover up the inadequacies of their societies, past and present. In other words, the affluence of the developed countries and the poverty of the developing countries are the results both of the astuteness and fecklessness of their respective ancestors.

This is vantage illustration of the menace of history, the ultimate mark of defeat (of the past) that haunts the present and darkens the prospect of a people. It hurts the most when the forebear lost out and descendants of the subjugator justify their vantage position in the present dispensation on a superiority complex that justifies their stereotyping the descendants of the defeated ancestors. As Keita (2004, p. 17) points out, blackness to racists connotes African; "...blackness is forced to bear the weight of Africa's history, and then collapses into Africinity." It is apparent that Johnson is not concerned, at least, not overtly, about racism. Ironically, the people of the developing countries fall into brackets, racial and geographical, that we are forced to read in-between the lines of the stark intellectualism. This is more so given the appeal to the respective levels of ancestral competence.

History is the study of man's struggle to master his environment. It is the aggregation of man's actions, reaction and even inaction. When people are united in experience, they share the same history. No matter how disparate they think they are, in subsequent epochs the mark of the past defines their common history. The Africans that lived through the immediate past centuries felt it as part of their immediate experience. Just as the historian cannot come into history as a judge (Taylor; 1963,

p.70), the present generation also does not have the luxury of rejecting their past no matter how unsavoury it was.

If we go by de Watteville's description of political economy as "the science of wealth acquisition common to the State as well as the Family" (Horvat, 1968), it makes sense that our concern about developmental issues in post-colonial Africa, as elsewhere, should be explored based on the aggregation of how Africa fared in a world (past) in which international trade was a zero-sum game (Hoogvelt, 1997, p.8) and in the (present) international society structured to function still in power relations matrix. Power as used here is a correlate of various variables; economics, polity, ideology and even the prevailing theory that explains current international economic relations.

History studies the past as a window on the present to enable us project thoughtfully into the future. Relations between rich and poor states follow the same historical trajectories as it obtains between rich and poor persons. Since these relations are continuously institutionalised and theorised (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 13), the rich (state or individual) understandably gloats at the poor's predicament. The poor sees the situation as inexorable. Yet, as Hoogvelt points out, Cox's "historical structure" illuminates the relative stability of international capital accumulation. Once understood, the jinx is broken; it is not in the stars of anyone (individual or state) to be poor.

A collective body of poor states need to fathom historical change, tackle the conundrum of international economic relations and learn from the pitfalls of their historical past. As the Yoruba say; "Let the nitwit not wise up so that people (of the world) can revel in taking advantage of them" (Proverb). So, the defeated of history need not despair. History is a continuum, a meshing of the past into the present, into the future, transforming cyclically into the past, the present and the future; marked by events, bringing forward the past into the double entry of the present. Its balance sheet is the future. The defeated of the past need not despair! Through library search and historical analysis, the paper interrogates Africa's experiences through the historical trajectory and examines how to harness its potentials for future greatness.

### Literature Review

The balkanisation of Africa into colonial hold by the European powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 started a process that marked the second phase of European subjugation of Africa (The first being the Trans-Atlantic slave trade) and introduced an element of discordance into African search for unity. Meanwhile, eleven years after Berlin, precisely in 1896, Ethiopia defeated Italy decisively in the Battle of Adwa (Milkias, 2005; Braun, 2012). While the world press reported widely this African defeat of a European power, the Victory of Adwa had been under-documented, understandably in European scholarship. It has been glossed over in historical literature ironically even by African authors. To portray Africans as perpetual losers, Berlin has been celebrated, Adwa has been relegated. Yet, the significance of Adwa cannot be wished away, both for the world and Africa.

It is also instructive to note that eight years into the partitioning of Africa by European powers, Pan-Africanism as an idea had metamorphosed into a movement action plan and activities to ensure that all people of African descent around the world would act in concert. From 1893 down to 1927, the African World sought unity and solidarity even as the world powers were uniting against Africa (Esedebe, 1980). Pan-Africanism arose in tide from 1924, with the proliferation of pressure groups in Europe, North America and Africa. This period also marked the rise of dynamic leadership of the movement, first Afro-American, then Afro-West Indians with the assistance of Africans abroad and culminating in African leadership of the movement in Mainland Africa (Ajala; 1980). Both W.E.B. DuBois (The intellectual) and Marcus Garvey (The activist) shared the Diaspora platform with so many others to raise the consciousness of Africans anywhere they were and the awareness of the world on African issues and plights.

The claim of the inferiority of the Black Man had been refuted by writing and by personal careers of people like Olaudah Equaino, James Africanus Horton and Benjamin Banneker. The calls for the Africanisation of Christianity and to abate European encroachment were part of the

responses to the humiliation and discrimination against Africans in the Diaspora. Perhaps the first most widely read and articulate Pan Africanist writer was Edward Wilmot Blyden. According to Blyden, men were the creatures of the circumstances in which they lived. Aside from calling the attention of the world and Africans themselves to the glory of Africa's past, Blyden called for "African nationality," and a citadel of hope and a centre of "African power"- physical, pecuniary and intellectual - from which African strength shall be felt around the world (Esedebe, 1980). Blyden was the first to advocate for the preservation of the "African personality," to ensure the distinctiveness of and equality of the African race with any other race. His seminal work, "Christianity, Islam and Negro Race" showed not only how Africa nestled the two faiths as "...the cradle which cherished their helpless infancy." The continent produced leaders and intellectuals of the two religions (Esedebe, 1980). Blyden was thus the precursor of all the intellectual Pan-Africanists such as DuBois, Garvey, Padimore, Nkrumah, Makonnen, and Nyerere among many others.

Langley (1973) has shown how the ideology and social classes emanating firstly in the Diaspora developed in West Africa through Black Consciousness. Ras Makonnen (Formerly Thomas Griffiths) in *Pan-Africanism from within* (King ed.; 1973) illuminates the alternative non-traditional approach to Pan-Africanism; the cluster of activities that marked his brand. Basically, as King explains, Makonnen conceived Pan-African movement as an all-African affair devoid of any entangling alliances that could hinder the attainment of the black objectives. George Padmore (Formerly Malcolm Ivan Nurse) was the intellectual and writer. Makonnen was the organiser, the entrepreneur and financier. This epoch-making idea and movement, Esedebe (1980, p.14) highlighted, has the following components:

- i. Africa as the homeland of Africans and the persons of African extraction;
- ii. Solidarity among men of African descent;
- iii. Belief in a distinct African personality;

- iv. Rehabilitation of Africa's past;
- v. Pride in African culture;
- vi. Africa for Africans in church and state;
- vii. The hope for a united and glorious Africa.

According to Prof. J.F. Ade Ajayi (2001), Pan-Africanism is the only ideology of nationalism that Africa has. It is a political and cultural phenomenon that unifies Africa, Africans (on the Mainland) and Africans in the diaspora. Makonnen sees as tragic the fading out of the spirit of revolt that led to the end of slavery in the West Indies (King ed., 1973, p.1). The Manchester Conference (1945) benefitted a lot from Makonnen's entrepreneurial savvy and organizational skills. It yielded the conviction that independence is never given; that it has to be taken (King, 1973, p.165).

Pan-Africanism shifted from an outside movement to the Mainland post-1945; it triggered nationalism and decolonization process. 1960 became "African Year" during which seventeen African states attained independence. Unity and solidarity, the Pan-African objectives were however threatened by the divergent views on how they could be achieved. African leaders split into the radicalists (Casablanca) and the gradualists (Monrovia) camps on how to effect African unity (Ajala, 1980, p.45). The formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May, 1963 was a watershed, not only in the annals of African history or in general international relations; it marked the culmination of the two generations of theoretical and practical Pan-Africanist activism. The organization provided a platform for the African voice in world affairs and a multilateral setting for African international relations. But the Africa that united into an international organization in 1963 was a far cry from the Africa of the pre-colonial era. Moreover, the organization was formed at a time when the international system had its peculiarity – its bipolar nature that divided the world into two antagonist blocs.

The functions, prospects and problems of the O.A.U. were dictated by three factors; first, the circumstances of its birth and the nature of the international system at the time, Europe had already created the world

in its own divisive image and the world was divided into two, behind European East and Euro-American West. But it was a world, nay Africa that had been defrauded (of its history), robbed (of its land and resources) and numbed (of its mind)! Second, the state systems that operated in O.A.U. member states were of political and economic contradictions. Third, the type of Charter (a compromise document) put in place at its formation.

Pan-Africanism was a means to and an end of African unity and solidarity. The combination of the above factors made the delivery (formation of the O.A.U.) a traumatic experience. Nonetheless, Pan-Africanism as a means has been successful. Its pursuit as an end lost tempo in 1963, with the individual states, perhaps with the exception of Ghana at the beginning, abandoning Pan-Africanist for nationalist agendas. The continuous call for African renaissance is an admission of a mission unaccomplished.

### **Africans: Masters of the Past, Victims of the Present**

If we look beyond the immediate past of some five centuries ago, the picture will be that of the great march of Africans towards progress and development of the African self. As Oluwatoki (2016) points out, the chances that states have in the international system are products of their historical background and experiences and how much they could navigate successfully in the precarious sea of the international arena. Africans, like other branches of *Homo sapiens*, adapted well to their environments; the flat nose with almost upturn nostrils is most suited for the Tropics. African ingenuity is displayed in the architecture of the thick mud wall which does not allow the heat to enter the house so fast, and which, rarefied at sunset, make the inside of the house cool all through. African proverbs and folklores show that Africans are empiricists. They conceive gravitational pull by the proverb: “Whatever goes up comes down” and the law of relativity by “Whatever faces someone inexorably backs someone else just like the *Gangan* drum.”

Africa produced the Great Pyramid out of 6 million tons of stone, as Architects and Engineers (Diop; 1974, p. 234) not simply as unskilled

labourers. Through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, Africans were in captivity for centuries. They were subjugated and discriminated against. But after the emancipation and in the very first generation, the fecundity of the African mind manifested. Dr. Lewis Latimer, Physicist, invented the Electric Light Bulb (1882), Thomas Marshall, Fire Extinguisher (1872), Albert C. Richardson, Insect Destroyer Gun (1899), George W. Carver, Peanut Butter (1896), Thomas A. Carrington, Stethoscope (1876), Alexander Miles, Elevator (1867) and Frederick M. Jones, Air-conditioning Unit (1949), among many others (The Black Inventions Museum; Biography.com). Banneker (Astronomer), Derham (Physician), Horton (Scientist), Augustine of Hippo, Cyprian and Tertullian (Church Fathers), Septimus Severus (Emperor), Suetonius (Historian), Terence (Playwright) and Apuleius (Philosopher and Author) are examples of Africans of genius (Esedebe, 1980).

Pushkin, arguably the greatest Russian poet was proud of his African ancestry (Rogers, 1947 cited in Makonnen (1973, p.84). Bilal Ibn Rabah was the first and perhaps the most important black personage of early Islam. Equal among equals of the companions; he was the *Muezzin* and the Treasurer of the Prophet (Abdul-Rauf, 1977). Antara Ibn Shaddad al-'Absi (ca. C.E. 525-615), the foremost name among the black personages of pre-Islamic Arabia was a poet laureate and the Achilles of the Arabian heroic age. He was born a prince of Arabia, a son of a black maid from Ethiopia. There was Rashid, slave and companion of Idris Ibn Abdullahi, founder of the Idrisid dynasty in the Maghrib. He exercised authority as regent for eleven years and preserved the young Idrisid state. Abu'l Misk Kafur (Musky Camphor), the Black Eunuch, was slave of Ikhshid, governor of Egypt (935-946). He died in 968, after 19 years of virtual (as regent for the Ikhshid sons) and three of titular rule (Oluwatoki; 1999, pp. 27-32). The self-taught, charismatic Malcolm X (1964) remains arguably the most articulate and the most eloquent "talk back" to the white man and white society for injustice to the black (Malcolm X and Harley, 1964).

African Art influenced European Surrealist Art when the latter encountered the former. One of the greatest legacies of African Art for



the Art World was the Africanisation of the Great Artist and Priestess of Obatala, Susanne Wenger, Adunni Olorisa. Her sculptures in the Sacred Groves in Oshogbo are but a part of the creations of the Sacred Art group of artists and are among the best in the world. Adunni Olorisa learnt the blue and white *Adire Eleko* from Yoruba women, created from it the multi-coloured batik, a new genre in design. Oluwatoki (2006) referred to Wenger as the Art Bridge of Africa - Europe relations.

Professor Thomas Adeoye Lambo introduced the village setting treatment of the mentally ill to Psychiatry and revolutionised the discipline. The Aro Mental Hospital, Abeokuta is a lasting testimony to African ingenuity in Psycho-therapy and the institutional rehabilitation of the neurotic (Adekile, 2002). In Obstetrics and Gynaecology, in Ophthalmology, Epidemiology, Cardiology and Paediatrics among others, Africa holds solution in updating the medical strides of humankind. In Social and Personal Relations, Financial Management, Animal Husbandry, Architecture and Building Technology, much of the daunting contemporary challenges can be handled through Africa's antecedents. They have been masters of the past. As Connah (2004, p. 239) put it, "Africa has been home to many cultures and civilizations over the ages, and to a rich technological heritage."

Africans are victims of the present. There are two angles to the problem. First is the spill over of the defeat of the recent past; slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and the attempt at obliterating the glory of Africa's past. The colonial mentality befuddles the African mind; the reason Malcolm X (1964) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) asked for the decolonization of the African mind. Second is the bifurcation (sometimes trifurcation) of contemporary African worldview. Christian and Islamic ideas confuse Africans and they take wrong views on improving their lives. They shackle themselves with wrong theology that conceives God as an umpire that shifts the goal posts while the game lasts. Today, Africans have made themselves victims of superstitions. The latest wave of Pentecostalism (late 1980s onward), a hybrid of religion and Americanism, casts every aspect of life on witchcraft and more attention is often paid on Satan

than God in the churches. The enemy is always lurking in the shadows in individual's social and economic life. Salvation is commercialised. Prayer centres mush room for deliverances and miracle work. Muslim clerics have caught into the fray.

Africans spend ample creative hours in "religious" services throughout the week; time meant for work. People are intimidated in the mass media with the unseen enemies which only these anointed ministers can combat. Rather than face the realities of the contradictions of the post-colonial state and the emotional intelligence deficit that hinder progress, even educated Africans put everything at the behest of the principalities. Thus crippled by encumbrances, the African mind is doubly rendered ineffective in a globalized world that is competitive, acquisitive and aggressive. In personal and national affairs, Africans hide behind religiosity and neglect to face the realities of the 21st century.

### **African Personality, Bridge to African Renaissance**

Renaissance refers to a period of renewal and rebirth during which new attitudes, values and new principles of life replace the inadequacies of a former period. As Ade Ajayi (2001, p.2) explains, the concept derives from European History of 1300-1600, end of the middle Ages and transition to modern History. It was however a period that culminated in European Imperialism and ardent efforts to whiten Egypt and delink it with the Black. Renaissance was a revolt against restrictions on the freedom of thought, a time of revival of learning and scholarship, exploration, adventure and discovery. African renaissance remains a mirage as long as we shy away from the processes of European renaissance. European encounters with the Muslim World especially in the Crusades revealed European backwardness. Identifying the problems, scholars and philosophers addressed the issues and called for new perceptions of life. Voltaire (1694-1778) called for mutual tolerance, condemned dogma, equated fanaticism to superstition as delirium to fever or rage to anger. He abhorred fanaticism and wondered how reformed and enlightened minds can superstitiously believe in witchcraft (Perry, Peden and Von

Laue; 1995, pp. 62-64). Thomas Paine (1737-1809) denounced Christian mysteries, miracles and considered the prophecies as superstitions. The supernatural birth of Christ he considered as having mark of fraud and impositions, which even the Jews rejected (Perry, Peden and Von Laue; 1995 pp.65-66). These two among others were the deists; they believed in God but rejected aspects of religion that do not sound to reason. Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789) saw religion as "a mere castle in the air," theology, "ignorance of natural causes reduced to a system, a long tissue of fallacies and contradictions." He considered man devoid of reason who believes in God (Perry, Peden and Von Laue, 1995, pp. 67-68). The point here is, the West freed itself from the shackles of religion numbing their minds and unleashed reasoning, thereby conquered nature and in effect they conquered the world.

The world today has gone past the narrowness of the atheists. But superstition camouflaged as religiosity is anti-science, anti-reason and anti-development. Africa cannot afford the luxury of lethargic indulgencies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century giving the damages done to its individual and collective psyche since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Ade Ajayi (2001) identified three aspects to European renaissance; first, it took approximately three centuries, second, it was led by artists and men of letters, not industrialists and technologists and third, it was an attempt *to revive past glories, inherent in the people's consciousness* (italics mine). In other words, European men and women of letters vociferously attacked whatever notions shackled European minds. They called for new views on and approach to human affairs and thus released people's energies in education, politics, economics and ethics. In a few centuries, Europe emerged ahead in science and technology and reformed its governmental and economic methods. Europeans took colonies often through gunboat diplomacy by the aid of the Maxim gun. Africa and other parts of the world were drawn effectively into the European orbit, acculturated and disoriented from their own cultural and technological templates.

In reverse, Africa has to first awaken its consciousness to its past glories; unlearn the falsehood imparted to its collective memory, remove the

garbage of untruth passed to Africa as education. It is only then that any cultural revival will be possible. This task however cannot be left to any part of the African family. All hands must be on deck. But Africa cannot wait for three centuries. Africa did it before. Technology is advanced and Africans are partakers in its development already. It is about refocusing and the time is now!

The Europe-led globalisation and its sequel, which Akinyemi (2000, p.18) termed “uni-globalisation” (the American brand) have changed the world forever. Africa cannot opt out of the new order. But for its renaissance, Africa cannot play ostrich; the continent has to admit to itself what hinder its progress and be ready to discard them. There can be no renaissance without the personality to drive it.

If we can take the achievement of African unity for granted, how does this unity operate to solve the social, economic and political problems facing Africans, Mainland and Diaspora? Ade Ajayi's (2001) emphasis that African renaissance is better discussed in the context of Pan-Africanism, shows that the latter concept is the quintessential African ideology. African renaissance refers to the rebirth of African ethos that will drive African development in its entire ramification.

The thesis of this paper is that a distinctive African personality is required to drive African renaissance. As Ofoegbu (1980, p.60) has explained, the depersonalization of the African was a by-product of his/her disarticulated social and political conditions. Aggrey's pride in the African colour, Azikiwe's insistence on respect for human dignity, Senghor's positive assertion of African identity and values; all identify first, Africans' need to find in their glorious past the élan for positive actions to regain their self-respect.

In his quest for a synthesis of psychoanalytic and historical methods to understand the role of human nature in historical events, Gay (1985, pp. xiii-xiv) explains as a moral imperative, an aesthetic taste, a scientific discovery, a political stratagem, a military decision and all the countless other guises that are soaked in the particular, immediate, as well as in their general cultural surroundings. They are however also responses to

inward pressures, that is, as translations of instinctual needs, defensive manoeuvres and anxious anticipations. Needless to say, Gay's observations apply to persons as well as people. African renaissance therefore calls for the recognition and a desire in Africans for the renewal and improvement of their condition. This renewal however to be truly African must be based on African milieu and adapted to the African identity and values. Failures to be so, Africa will remain adrift in the sea of human personality.

African personality does not indiscriminately reject everything non-African. As Mbonu Ojike (cited in Ofoegbu, 1980, p.63) pointed out, it is about boycotting the boycottable, by recognising, as Ofoegbu explains, what Africa possesses; sharing with the world, being self-reliant, taking duly from the world but never being dependent. As the proverb goes, "A joint meal is not enjoyable to someone who does not provide part of the dishes." After all the centuries of subjugation and derision from our human cousins, and all the denials about our contribution to our human heritage, if Africa fails to establish and assert herself, it will be laughable bad news for subsequent generations.

The hope put in African socialism based on humanism and communalism that it will supplant Euro-Christian individualism has been dashed by the gradual death of the pre-colonial social structures. Through western education and the outreach of its ideas, values and tastes, African society has lost much of its basic features in family (Yoruba *Idile*), family compound (Yoruba *Agboole*) and society (Yoruba *Awujo*) and in social relations and ethics. Urban centres present more glaring dislocation but the rural communities are not spared.

To get back the old order might be impossible. The need for that does not even arise. But Africa can evolve a new Africa where individualism will be tempered, where communalism will be reinforced, in cooperative societies, in communal projects and in eschewing division in ethnic nationalism, religious bigotry and aggrandisement. Africa has the onerous task to recreate its society addressing the issues of neglecting the common good for self-annihilating narcissism.

### Globalisation and Africa's Tensile Strength

Globalization operates as universalization of capitalism. It operates, as Tomlinson (2002, p.272) explains, "simultaneously and interrelated in the economic, technological-communicational, political and cultural spheres of human life." The cultural implication surpasses the imposition of western lifestyle; it involves the dissemination of the "entire range of institutional features of cultural modernity." Modernity involves institutionalization and regulation of cultural practices, submerging cultural identity; self and communal definitions, Tomlinson explains, based around differentiations.

Our identities - gender, religion, race and ethnicity, nationality, sexuality - are publicly organised and institutionalised as ours. It is in this respect that Akinyemi (2000) sees "uni-globalisation" as reflecting a globe "where the overriding values of one nation (USA) and one civilization (western world) bestride the world and everyone else bends to its will."

Tomlinson conceives globalization's distribution of identity across all cultures, not as obliteration of identities but as part of the cultural package of global modernity. This is a verbose attempt to distract from packaging westernization as modernity. It is understandable that the conqueror states present their civilization and cultural values as superior. Europeans claim that they were on civilizing mission; Modelski (2000, p.58) has catalogued the disintegration of the societies of Peru and Mexico, the terrible decline of the population of Central America through violence, diseases and depression and the extermination of the Amerindians. Europeans - English, French, and Spaniards etc. - destroyed the people, took their land and planted their "new civilization." It may well be that the white man and his rule might not be the last on the (American) continent, as Turner (Armstrong, 1972, p. xviii) postulates concerning North America; some combinations of events might still restore the Indian to his original status as the ruler of the land. Perhaps this is what the Dwamish chief Seattle (Cited by Turner: Introduction in Armstrong, 1972) warned about when he said:

When the last red men shall have perished, and the memory of my

tribe shall have become a myth among the white men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe.

At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone.

Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

This primordial admonition has not been heeded. The invisible dead of the Amerindians might still come; the non-powerlessness of the dead might still be shown. But Africa needs not allow the long wait; Africans have refused to perish from the onslaught of Euro-American hegemony.

The “new civilization” now packages its new identity to the world making everybody a global citizen through what has been termed “coca-colization,” the denim jeans and the culture of eating out, among various others; the “mixed blessing” of Tomlinson’s reference. But this new civilization makes the pancreas dysfunctional, leaves in its trails cirrhosis of the liver, renders the lung cancerous. This cultural package obliterates specific identities, replaces them with general often vulgar attenuate identities.

Africa’s tensile strength shows the robustness of its civilization in the face of slavery, slave trade, colonialism, denials, neo-colonialism and globalization. No African people have been wiped out; none of its civilisations has been buried. While it has European settler communities with the attendant socio-political tension, Africa was not demographically submerged by the swarm of European adventurers. African Diaspora survived in spite of the odds and over the centuries, the Diaspora has retained the African identity in its distinctive culture.

The first step to “Africabrate” will be to dig into the past of Black

African creativity; to correct the centuries of European denial of Greek debt to Black-ruled Egyptian civilisation. This “Africabration” will close the gap in the history of civilisation and galvanise the present and future generations of Africans to “Africreate” and spur them out of their lethargy and inferiority complex. This is the first step towards the decolonisation of the African mind; the unlearning, relearning, unthinking, rethinking paradigm (See Diop’1974, pp. 233-234).

Mainland and Diaspora Africa must make a synthesis of mutual needs to make Africa rise again in the Arts and the Social Sciences, in the Natural and the Medical Sciences, in Engineering and Technology, in the Agricultural Sciences, in Military and Strategic sciences. Africa has not been researched enough; it has many challenges crying for solution. African governments under the auspices of the African Union have the onerous duty of challenging its citizens; create the atmosphere that will unleash African ingenuity in the arts, letters, science and technology. In today’s world that knows only the language of power, Africa has got to package its cultural identities and through globalised means, give them to the world.

African identities should manifest in African creativity – in all spheres – addressing the needs of humanity. The hard and soft powers to be “Africreated” will Africanise globalisation for the world to have to turn to Africa. By globalizing African creation and inventions – in governance, economy, and strategy, and in all conceivable fields -, the world will concede to Africa its torch bearer status in human civilisation.

Africa can draw on its culture of struggle, the inextinguishable spirit, and its depth of wisdom. The spirit of Adwa (1896), Isandlwana (1878) and much other African strategic ingenuity that turned the scale against the Europeans on the battlefield (Greene, 2006) should be invoked in African combat of its various challenges. It requires a collective approach.

According to Barraclough (1967, p. 195), Asian and African societies were neither stagnant nor static prior to European incursion. Aside from their transformation by western industry and western technology, by far the most important force that propelled them to political awakening



was their determination to maintain, reshape and create their own personality. The people realized, Barraclough explained, the necessity for modernization and avoidance of the alienating westernization. They sought for Modern Africa, to assimilate useful European elements, to be adapted in combination with elements from the African past; they desired to create “a modern viable African culture” (Legum, 1962 cited in Barraclough, 1967, p. 195).

Six decades into independent Africa, Africans continue to lose touch with their great heritage while thanks to technology, a globalized (western) culture is creeping menacingly into the African psyche making them gradually to succumb to the very westernization they had despised at independence. Historicism as a theory can use history to explain cultural and social events and situations. It does not condemn a people to a lethargic quagmire. Africans should seek for inspiration from their glorious past and great achievements and especially from their strength and resilience that have kept them standing in the face of the Menace of History. The key to this renewal is not in some futile efforts to copy a receded life and entertaining pattern of the past, nor is it in superstitious clinging to religiosity. It is in embracing technology. As Adiele (2006, p. 27) put it, “...many developing countries do not adequately appreciate the controlling role of technology in international affairs.” There is no gainsaying it that a state’s level of technology determines its position in the International Community. This is a riot act for the African Union and its members to work on removing Africa’s technological deficit without delay.

### Conclusion

We have in the course of this paper attempted to put the African experience in historical perspective. Africa has contributed its quota to world civilizations by being the pioneers, peopling ancient Egypt and creating its civilisation that led humanity in its stride to development. As products of Africa’s geography; its people not only adapted phenotypically, its civilization demonstrates their absolute mastery of their environment.

Africa has in the course of about five centuries got through slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The partitioning of Africa in Berlin (1884/1885) as the final act of the Concert of Europe ushered in a new era of African History with the change of its face – politically, economically and even demographically. Even as European states balkanised Africa among them, Africa gave a devastating defeat to Italy. A grand alliance among African states after Adwa could have changed the fate of Africa in its subsequent encounters with Europe. The idea and movement that triggered Africa's actions towards rebirth started in the New World. Pan-Africanism was also nurtured and practiced from within. Now than ever before African unity is needed for its renaissance. This is the time to seek African solutions to African problems.

Pan-Africanism ended up in the Mainland Africa and yielded the nationalist struggles that led into the decolonization of Africa. The fervour for African unity culminated in the formation of the Organization of African Unity. The tempo of Pan-Africanism went down with the states concentrating on national agenda; a miscalculation since the individual African states had been divided against themselves. They had been so structured that they could not individually combat the European states (and later American hegemony).

Globalization is a new challenge that calls for African unity and renaissance more urgently. This renaissance can only be effectively anchored on the African personality. Once again, we should celebrate African achievements on a continuous basis and create a new atmosphere—*Innovative Africa*—that will nurture the Africa of the future; vibrant, progressive and proudly African.

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