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**REVISITING PAN-AFRICANISM,  
THE RALLYING POINT  
OF THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN**

**Introduction**

The first duty of every man is to preserve himself in being. Philosophers like John Locke and especially Thomas Hobbes understood this point as the instinct of self preservation. As a result when the need for the ownership of private properties emerged, man found out that there would be chaos if every man performed this task of self preservation for himself. Such a system would enthrone the mindset that ‘might is right’ and ‘justice is the interest of the stronger party.’ These were the unfortunate submissions of the sophists in the ancient/cosmological era of philosophy.

It was to forestall the type of lawlessness that the human society inaugurated the commonwealth on the condition that every man gives up his right to self preservation to a certain man or to a certain assemblage of men on the condition that other persons give up their rights and authorize the actions of the Leviathan in like manner. Pan-Africanism arose as Africans considered their ordeals as a people who were being plundered and dehumanized by fellow human beings from the Western world through slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and if one may say today through globalization and privatization imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. This paper seeks to appraise the success of this movement and its appropriateness to Contemporary African Philosophy in this age of westernization of the world through the phenomenon of globalization.

### **Pan-Africanism: What is it?**

Pan-Africanism was an instrument used by the National Ideological class of African philosophers in the agitation and actualization of the independence of African nations. It did not have a common founder. Rather it grew as a child of circumstance born at the time Africans were being dehumanized, brutalized and treated as mere instruments both at home by foreign governments and in Diaspora where so many Africans lived hundreds of years as slaves who were owned by their masters the way dogs are owned. In the true sense of what Africans were taken for, they were even ranked below the dogs because dogs have respect and dignity today.

### **Historical Development of Pan-Africanism**

Pan-Africanism as a concept is a socio-political worldview, philosophy and movement aimed at unifying native Africans and those of African heritage into a global African community. In other words, it is a call for a politically and economically united Africa. It is a call to the Africans to assert and indeed recover their humanity long battered through colonial exploitation, slavery and neo-colonization.

As a philosophy, Wikipedia notes that it 'represents the aggregation of the historical, cultural, spiritual, artistic, scientific and philosophical legacies of Africans from past times to the present'. As an ethical system, its origin is traceable to the ancient times when the Western world began to take Africans slaves. Enslaved Africans and their latter descendants found themselves enmeshed in a system of exploitation where their diverse African origins became a sign of their service status, and where their masters worked tirelessly to ensure that they never came to understand themselves. Pan-Africanism aimed at setting aside the cultural differences among the enslaved Africans while trying to foster unity of purpose and actions, solidarity and resistance to this perceived exploitation. It also sprang as a result of the resolution of educated Africans to wrestle the continent out of the hands of the invaders called the imperialists/colonialists.

In the face of several slave insurrections at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this political movement developed across Europe, America and Africa with the major purpose to weld these disparate movements into a strong network of solidarity in order to put an end to this oppression. Modern Pan-Africanism however, began around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the African Association, later renamed the Pan-African Association, was organized by Henry Sylvester Williams.

Their first conference was held in 1900. The concept of Pan-Africanism was however soon expanded to include African Diaspora.

Having come this far, it becomes very important to highlight some of the factors that led to the development of this Pan African movement. As already indicated above, the movement was originally intended to challenge the main activities of the then imperialist government, slave trade, colonialism and racism, which were at their height by the late 19th century. Another factor however, which contributed to the ultimate task of the conceptualization of this idea and its actual birth by African intellectuals such as William Edward, Burghardt Dubois, Joseph Casely-Hayford, George Padmore and others was the Berlin conference of 1885 where the Pan-African continent was 'carved up and apportioned amongst the western powers without her consent.' This is the submission of F. B Bankie (2007). I shall discuss this under the subheading Pan-Africanism: The harbinger of liberation.

Pan-Africanism can be talked about from two different divisions, namely the broad and the narrow divisions.

In the narrower sense, its definition is limited to a political movement for the unification of the African continent while its broader definition includes the cultural and intellectual movements of all Africans the world over, that is, the global African presence. Thus, in the first Pan-African conference held in 1900 and two district others held both in 1958, the narrower sense of Pan-Africanism can be specifically identified.

The first conference was held in London from the 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> July 1900, and was the brain child of Henry Sylvester Williams a West Indian Barrister. Among the African-American intellectuals in attendance was Dr. William Edward Burghardt Dubois (1868–1963) who as quoted in Legum (1962:24) had made a statement to the effect that, 'if the Negro were to be a factor in the world's history it would be through a Pan-African movement'. It is worth noting that this man's admirers saw him as the harbinger of freedom and an attacker of injustice. He was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 1868 at Barrington vicinity with perhaps 25–50 black men in a population of 5000. Hence overt racism was at its minimal level there but racism was suggestive through 'a constant barrage of innuendos and vindictive attitude of its residents.' (cf. [www.dubois.org](http://www.dubois.org))

In the face of such pronouncement, the conference was thus for him a dream come true. At that conference, he declared that 'The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea'. In acknowledgement of his contributions to fostering the course of Pan-Africanism, Martin Lutter King Jr. was quoted on the Internet as having written that:

History cannot forget W.E.B DUBOIS because history has to reflect truth and Dr Dubois is a tireless explorer and a gifted discoverer of social truths. His singular greatness lay in his quest for truth about his own people. There were very few scholars who concerned themselves with honest study of the black man and he sought to fill this immense void. The degree to which he succeeded disclosed the immense dimension of the man. ([www.dubois.org](http://www.dubois.org))

It was during his doctoral studies at the University of Berlin that 'Dubois for the first time was exposed to the fact that the race problems in Americas, Africa and Asia and the political development of Europe were one. This was the period of his life that united his studies of history, economics and politics into a scientific approach of social research.' ([www.dubois.org/htm/DuboisBio.html](http://www.dubois.org/htm/DuboisBio.html)) Thus as a student in Harvard he wrote his doctoral thesis on 'The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in America.' This became the most authoritative work on that subject as well as the first series in Harvard's Historical series. In his research Fellowship year with the University of Philadelphia he came up with the Philadelphia Negro. In this work, as quoted in [www.dubois.org](http://www.dubois.org), he was succinct in his analysis of the predicaments of the Negro that he penned down the following: 'It revealed the Negro group as a symptom, not a cause; as a striving, palpitating group, and not an inert, sick body of crime; a long historic development and not a transient occurrence.' (see [www.dubois.org/htm/DuboisBio.html](http://www.dubois.org/htm/DuboisBio.html))

Also present at the Pan-African Movement meeting in 1900 was the Afro-Jamaican Marcus Mossiah Garvey (1887–1940) whose father was kidnapped, enslaved and transported over the Middle Passage to the 'New World' where he worked in the plantations of Jamaica. As recorded in (1969:42) this man later 'sought to unite all Africans the world over, to establish a bridgehead on the continent of Africa from which to fight colonialism and weld the whole of Africa into a united nation'. Garvey eventually went to Britain and the United States where he tried to mobilize Africans wherever they were to return to Africa with the slogan 'Africa for Africans here and abroad'. At a convention held in New York, August 1–31 1920, Marcus Garvey formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association UNIA. At that convention Garvey protested against the exploitation and dehumanization of Africans by the Western world. In one of his uncompromising orations he said "Up you mighty people, you can accomplish what you will." Garvey held pageants and parades in and through 'Harlems' with red, black and green liberation flags flying (The colors symbolize the skin, the blood and the hopes and growth potential of black people. The green is also symbolic of the earth.) ([www.dubois.org](http://www.dubois.org)).

Following the first Pan-African conference in 1900, between 1919 and 1927, Dubois organized four Pan-African congresses which later came to be called the

Du boisian congresses and as such marked the first phase of Pan-Africanism. The first was held in 1919 in Paris, the second in 1921 in London, Brussels and Paris, the third in 1932 in London and Lisbon, and the fourth in 1927 in New York. Thompson (1969:55) observes that of the four, while the first two showed promise for the growth of the Pan-African idea, the last two had been disappointing and revealed a diminution of its forces.

After several attempts by the 'father of Pan-Africanism' W. E. B Dubois and other leaders like Dr Harold Moody, the fifth Pan-African congress assembled from 15–19 October 1945 at the Charlton Town Hall, Manchester with over two hundred delegates from the coloured world in attendance. The contribution of the Pan-African Federation (PAF) and George Padmore's International African Service Bureau (IASB) were the main reasons why this conference was possible. This new breed of African Nationalists who attended the congress made it their business to clarify issues such as the rejection of assimilation, the outright demand for independence and the organization of mass movements to secure these ends.

After the Manchester congress, the resolutions intended to totally uproot European colonialism and its racist practices remained in the realm of ideas, until thirteen years later when the pan-African political movement landed in Africa in 1958 after Ghana's independence. The independence of Ghana was historically significant since, according to Thompson (1969:126), it 'removed one of the disabilities under which the (Pan-African) Movement had operated in the first phase, namely, the absence of a base from which propaganda and ideas could be disseminated. The first Pan-African conference to be held on the African soil was the one in Accra, Ghana in April 1958 with eight African governments independent at that time in attendance, namely; Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Ghana. This group of eight sovereign nations in Africa issued a joint declaration on behalf of Africa condemning colonialism and the apartheid system in South Africa. In December 1958, the first All-African People's Conference was held and it purposefully linked itself to the Pan-African tradition. It was the impetus of these two Accra conferences that ushered Pan-Africanism into the realm of real politics and led to the formation of the O.A.U in May 1963. This O.A.U has recently metamorphosed into the African Union (A.U).

In the 1960s and 70s the term became associated with Afrocentrism, an ideology of African American unity and identity politics that kick-started as an offshoot of the civil rights movement. In 1974, the sixth Pan-African Congress was held in Dar es Salaam with 52 delegations representing independent states in Africa and the Caribbean, liberation movements and communities of people of African descent in North America, South America, Britain and the Pacific. It represented the first in the series covered in Africa, in self-governing African state. It made an impact on Liberation Movements of the African countries still

under colonial domination especially the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau and settler colonialism in the then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa with the bulk of these countries ridding themselves of colonialism shortly after this meeting. This meeting comprised of sessions on Economics, National Liberation, Culture, Education, Science and Technology. The high point of the meeting was the paper delivered by Walter Rodney.

In 1994, the seventh Pan-African congress and second to be held on the African continent in the hundred-year history of the PAC covered, with president Y. Museveni of Uganda as patron, Col. K. Otafire as convener and Dr. T. Abdul-Raheem the secretary general was held. The theme was 'Facing the Future in Unity, social Progress and Democracy: Perspectives Towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. Seventeen African Governments were represented by either diplomats accredited to Uganda or by official ministerial delegations. Over thirty African countries had representations by different political forces and groups, especially, opposition, pro-democracy, youth and women activities. Congress set up a post-congress secretariat under the leadership of the Secretary General, which continued to function in Kampala into the late 1990's.

Another factor was the slave trade and the experience of slavery which forms the very beginning of its operations. This slave trade met a brick wall in the form of resistance and protests against the degradation of Africa and Africans. This was based on the undeniable fact that 'Africans transported across the Atlantic to western plantations were unwilling victims of circumstances beyond their control.

It was necessary because of the fallacious assumptions of the Westerners that Africans were inferior to the Western people. In his preaching, Martin Luther King Jr. alluded to the unhealthy dichotomy between the residents in the North and South of the U.S., a dichotomy that was based on the unhealthy belief that the African is inferior to the white man in intelligence, innovation etc. Martin Luther King wrote:

To justify this subjugation of the African, some Western thinkers and anthropologists settled for works that denied the humanity of the African. For instance, Emile Ludwig, a member of the school of Levyl Bruhl wrote as quoted in Idowu (1962:30) "how can the untutored African conceive God...? How can this be? Deity is a philosophic al concept which the savages are incapable of framing." By extension this argument implies that since the African is a savage and is incapable of conceiving God, he cannot be ranked among the class of humanity. According to Okafor (1991:93), Hegel was more precise on this when he wrote that "blacks are wholly not within the class of humanity."

Okere (1975:5) traced the origin of this inferiority complex which the African developed to "the story of the material success of the imperialist West. Another

crucial factor is that Africans got themselves locked up for centuries as 'cultural islands' without experiencing the benefits of culture-contact ("which would have injected the new blood necessary for productivity in any culture"). As a result of this, the African today is faced with two dilemmas: should he dump completely his cultural heritage or should he revive it. If he chooses to dump completely his cultural heritage then it is tantamount to losing his Africanity as a person for no one can sever himself completely from his root. On the other hand, if he chooses to revive his cultural heritage, how and which should he revive? Should the African be discriminatory in making this cultural revival? I shall give my philosophical opinion on this in the concluding section of this work.

On his part Oreoye (1976:5) in the *Dilemma of the Black Man* made an observation that seems to prove that the African had wasted his years but this does not in any way mean that he is inferior to the white race. In his words:

Civilization is a heritage of mankind and not a native of any region. It is not an exclusive contribution of any race. Many races have contributed to civilization through contacts. But unless the black race makes its own significant contributions to civilization, our race will continue to be pitied or at best merely tolerated like all beggars. We will continue to be world's underdog. To make it the black man needs a hurricane of change known as revolution. But it appears to me that a great majority of the black middle class are not ready for this. Here lies the black man's dilemma.

He thereafter found solace in the actions of the leaders of some of the African states in the 1960s and 1970s who seemed to be focused on the emancipation of the African from the shackles of backwardness that he wrote on the same page of his work:

Pride in our past is meaningful only if it becomes a source of strength for great achievements in science and technology by some of the free black nations of the world. Pride in our past is meaningful if it enables, at least, a black nation to make an original, breakthrough to modernity. Nkrumah's Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania, Guyana and Nigeria since the July, 1975 coup had sought or have been seeking original solution to their problems of development. They have thinking and progressive leaders. But these are so few in relation to many black states that are helpless and have no sense of direction. (See Oreoye 1976:5)

Have these African nations been able to continue with the spate of thinking and indigenous methods of development Oreoye praised them in the past there may not be any need for this research work. But today Africa has derailed to the extent that she is a mere appendage among the committee of nations in the world. She is only reckoned with as the source of raw materials to the developed nations of the world. Perhaps at this juncture a cursory look at Nigeria the so

called giant of Africa may be necessary so that through the logic of induction we can see the same situation in the many countries of Africa.

Nigeria is a country with the highest population index in the whole continent of Africa. Nature has bestowed upon her superabundant natural resources like crude oil, natural gas, gold tin, coal, iron ore, precious stones, etc., therefore, all that is needed to set this giant on the path to greatness is good government and good management of resources. However, a cursory look at the nation presents a future as bleak as the sepulcher and a present with extraordinary high rate of mortality. The nation has been plundered by the military who were trained to kill and to destroy. The thirteen years of democracy in the country has also not fared better. Reasons are multifarious: lack of planning, unbridled acceptance of anything foreign as the best way to solve the problems of the nation without seeking to situate such policies to the African environment; the exocentric attitude of both the government and the governed; corruption brought about by winning elections as a result of being the anointed son of the Western world.

Faced with these types of problems during the colonial years the educated Africans felt it a need to emancipate Africa from colonial imperialism, economic exploitation and cultural alienation through their various writings. Lenrie Peters wrote the poem 'Africa, My Africa' in which he encapsulated the ill treatment of the African and the Western perception of the African as inferior. On his part Kwesi Brew wrote 'Lest we should be the last' in which he portrayed the African as thoroughly alienated from his culture. He ended the poem on the note that when they got to the abode of the god, a movement for which they left behind everything that mattered to them they were surprised to see those the gods had loved and respected mock the gods to their face.' Therefore, this movement began as Africans saw the need to assert their humanity in a world that could take them as anything but human. In the words of Thompson (1969:4) 'Pan-Africanism may be seen as an idea that... was concerned not only with protest but also with the fashioning of a coherent philosophy which would enable the African as well as 'Negro' man not only to enhance his material welfare but also to elevate him from the centuries of humiliation which has been his lot and thus enable him to re-establish his dignity in a world that has hitherto conceded him none'.

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, the President of Pan African Congress of Azania made this call anew when he wrote Izwe Lethu [the land is ours] thus:

Here is a tree rooted deeply in the African soil, nourished with waters from the rivers of Africa. Come all thee Africans, sons and daughters of the soil, young and old and become with us the leaves of the same branch and branches of the same tree. Come and work with us tirelessly and fearlessly for efficient and non racial governance of our country. (see Road to Pan-Africanism in <http://www.panafricanperspective.com>)



This was a clarion call to all people of African descent both at home and in the Diaspora, young and old to come around and help in the governance of Africa. Nkrumah (1961:xi–xiv) wrote:

For centuries, Europeans dominated the African continent. The white man arrogated to himself the right to rule and to be obeyed by the non white; his mission he claimed was ‘to civilize Africa’. Under this cloak the European robbed the continent of vast riches and inflicted unimaginable suffering on the African people. All this makes a sad story, but now we must be prepared to bury the past with its unpleasant memories and look to the future. All we ask of the former colonial powers is their good will and cooperation to remedy past mistakes and injustices and to grant independence to the colonies in Africa.

Eventually, all African states have succeeded in wresting power from the jaws of the colonial invaders but cannot truly be said to be independent. While Africans reign in Africa, the former colonial masters still rule in and through the African rulers. The later prescribes for Africa the type of government they should adopt and the economic system that will best serve their interest (the interest colonial masters). In a nutshell, they are still ruling through the African elites who must take instruction from them to the extent that they can be removed through NATO invasions that are often disguised as serving the interest of the ordinary civilians as could be read in the NATO – led invasion and devastation of Libya. At this juncture it may be necessary to quote an excerpt from “if there were global justice, Nato would be in the dock over Libya” as contained in the [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk) of 15 may, 2012.”

Libya was supposed to be different. The lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan had been learned, David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy insisted last year. This would be a real humanitarian intervention. Unlike Iraq, there would be no boots on the ground. Unlike in Afghanistan, Nato air power would be used to support a fight for freedom and prevent a massacre. Unlike the Kosovo campaign, there would be no indiscriminate cluster bombs: only precision weapons would be used. This would be a war to save civilian lives. Seven months on from Muammar Gaddafi’s butchering in the ruins of Sirte, the fruits of liberal intervention in Libya are now cruelly clear, and documented by the UN and human rights groups: 8000 prisoners held without trial, rampant torture and routine deaths in detention, the ethnic cleansing of Tawerga, a town of 30,000 mainly black Libyans (already in the record as a crime against humanity) and continuing violent persecution of Sub-Saharan Africans across the country.

The author of the paper then went further to emphasize that the National Transitional Government imposed upon the Libyans “passes Gaddafi-style laws

clamping down on freedom of speech, gives legal immunity for formal rebels and disqualifies election candidates critical of the new order. These are the political forces Nato played decisive roles in bringing to power.” Nato it is reported went contrary to protecting civilians which they claimed to be their principal task having learnt from their invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen. Nato had promised before the clamp down on Libya that they would use precision weapons but ended up doing the direct opposite of what they said they would do thereby showing in clear terms that the mission was meant to ouster Gaddafi and evolve an indirect rule of Libya. The paper wrote that:

While Nato’s UN mandate was to protect civilians, the alliance in practice turned that mission on its head. Throwing its weight behind one side in a civil war to oust Gaddafi’s regime, it became the air force for the rebel militias on the ground. So while the death toll was perhaps between 1,000 and 2,000 when Nato intervened in March, by October it was estimated by the NTC to be 30,000 – including thousands of civilians. ...*But so long as international law is only used against small or weak states in the developing world, it won’t be a system of international justice but an instrument of power politics and imperial enforcement.* (italics mine)

This paper ends on the note that “just as the urgent lesson of Libya – for the rest of the Arab world and beyond – is that however it is dressed up, foreign military intervention isn’t a short cut to freedom. And far from saving lives, again and again it has escalated slaughter.”

Unger (2003) in House of Bush, House of Saud: The Secret relationship Between the World’s Two Most Powerful Dynasties reckoned that an attempt to service friendship and to protect the economic interests of both the Bush and the Saud families was responsible for President Bush socializing with a Saudi billionaire on September 13, 2001 (barely forty eight hours) after the terrorist bombing of the US. He asked “why did Saudi Arabia the birthplace of most of the hijackers – get preferential treatment from the White House even as the world Trade center continued to burn?” (See Unger (2003:back page) Unger asked this question because President Bush was dining and wining with his counterpart and their cronies even immediately after the September, 11 attack on the U.S. Unger therefore reasoned that the reason behind the no love loss situation between the duo and between the nationalities of the two countries was because of the close economic ties the leaders of the two nations had.

The implication of the case of Libya is that situations prevalent during the time of the formation of the Pan African Movement are still realities of today. The neo-colonial postures and anglings of the Western world, the plunder of the economy of the African continent by the agents of imperialism and globalization, the upward looking to Europe and America for approval of leadership by the

political class of the continent all portray the fact that Pan-Africanism is valuable today as it was in the years of its formation. To lay credence to this, Dr Pekho Motsoko, President of the Pan African Congress of Azania wrote:

Our land is well endowed in valuable assets such as gold, diamond, platinum, palladium, chromium, vanadium, manganese, uranium, iron ore, coal. It produces a wide array of vegetables, grapes, sugar, citrus, and other fruits, and sustains the domestic wine industry. It is essential to the cattle, dairy, sheep, and goat cultivation industries, among other sectors. But with all the wealth of the land, the people remain abysmally poor, maltreated and ill served. This abominable condition exists because the same elements that controlled the land during the former apartheid era continue in the control of the land today. So we see that, in the instant, the more things change, the more they remain the same. (see 'road to Pan-Africanism' in <http://www.panafricanperspective.com>)

Indeed, the more things change in Africa the more they remain the same because the political class today in Africa sees itself as the messenger of the Western world. As a result, they seek by all means the endorsement and approval of the western world to the utter degradation and blatant denial of the humanity of its kiths and kins.

### **The intentions behind the establishment of the Pan African Movement**

It is pertinent at this material moment to look at the bases upon which the Pan-African movement was founded. This will also serve as my base in assessing the progress or retrogression of the Movement and the attendant conclusions that will follow of necessity. I shall discuss the bases for this movement from five different themes which to me are the contents or areas adequately covered or intended to be covered by the movement.

### **Pan-Africanism: A Universal Expression of Black Pride and Achievement**

This aspect of the Movement was so much emphasized by Antar Diop, Leopold Sedar Senghor and Aime Cesaire. Senghor personally wrote against the French policy of assimilation which had as its target the complete assimilation of the African into the culture of the French man while ensuring that nothing is

left of the African culture. In essence this policy was directed to ensuring total usurpation and alienation of the African from his culture. This to the French colonial masters is the only proof and guarantee that the African has been civilized. Even today, efforts are made by the respective French governments to ensure that Africans learn the French language to the detriment of African indigenous languages, e.g. the Igbo language. Senghor and co therefore wrote to remind the Africans of the glorious achievements of their forebears through ingraining in them black consciousness. Hence they wrote that black is pride. This was ideologically motivated to make the African proud of things indigenous to him and to extricate from his mind exocentric attitudes. In a nutshell, it aims at a return to African culture, society and values.

Aime Cesaire and Leopold S. Senghor were able to instill this pride in the African through their joint published work in the journal *L'Etudiant Noir* (the Black Student).

This notion was also expressed by the Steve Bantu Biko led Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa. Steve Biko described this as 'an attitude of mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time'.

In his rethinking francophone cultures Karmal (2004:9–23 at 13) penned that:

The long exercise of colonial subjection, and the mystification of racist ideas of superiority that went with it, saw francophone Africans being taught to discard whatever they had of their own and to acquire instead the trappings of French civilization. "Gallicization" was the basis of almost all education in French colonial territories. A few Africans were given the keys to French culture. However, the intention was not to promote symbiosis, but assimilation. This project failed entirely: the best and the brightest assimilés used the keys given to them to open another door, the door to African cultural liberation.

The specific reference to French colonialism is of pivotal importance in Senghor's Hermeneutics in the sense that the policy of assimilation pretends to make one a French citizen by stripping one of one's identity. In other words, the hallmark of assimilation is a discarding of everything African in a person and an unbridled acceptance of alienation from self, environment and culture. **Oguejiofor** observed in his "Negritude as Hermeneutics" that "while the basic ideologies propping up colonial subjugation and the resentment they engendered in the African remained generally similar, it is not to be overlooked that the earliest apostles of negritude were all products of French assimilationist policy. While these *assimilés* were strident in their attachment to their pristine African past, their counterparts in the English-speaking colonies were generally less afraid of being westernized.'<sup>1</sup> (See

Oguejiofor O, 'Negritude as Hermeneutics' in 2009, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 83, No. 1)

Therefore, the philosophy of Negritude is an attempt to stall the machination of the western world in her effort to sustain the tempo of dehumanization of the African, alienation of the man and a complete subversion or annihilation of his culture. The work of Senghor was therefore an effort at questioning the status quo in a bid to help the African become consciously aware of the hidden dangers of uncritical acceptance of the French policy of assimilation no matter how appealing the argument of the imperialists may be. There is no understanding except if there is misunderstanding, a negativity that becomes the origin of hermeneutics.

Like Gadamer, Sedar Senghor sought to remove this misunderstanding so that the African of his time and his succeeding generations can realise their full potentialities as Africans and be able to borrow when necessary with a spirit of discrimination. Negritude as understood and couched by Senghor becomes hermeneutic and bothers on all aspects of his life. Viewed from this background, Oguejiofor concludes that one then sees Negritude for what it is, a philosophy with clear aims, in particular, the aims of furnishing a corrective measure and of contributing to the amelioration of the status quo that wrecks havoc on the psyche of the colonized.

Kamal Salhi (2004:13) notes, "So great was the degradation inflicted by colonial rule that many Africans have come to join in the denigration of their own historical achievement." The negative impact of this is so great that one can go on to say that the situation is so terrible that the West has succeeded in de-Africanizing the African too the extent that exocentrism is rife in Africa. Senghor concludes that, "Africa's misfortune has been that our secret enemies, in defending their values, have made us despise our own." (L. S. Senghor, "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin et la politique africaine," in *Senghor: Prose and Poetry*, 99–101, at 99, n.d)

### **Pan-Africanism: A Return to Africa by People of African Descent Living in the Western Diaspora**

This theme arose out of protests made against the inhuman treatment meted out to people of African descent living in Europe and America. These Africans were no more than the beasts of the burden meant to defy the scorching heat of the sun in the sugar plantations to the glorious advantage of the delicate white settlers of the New World. They were condemned to sit at the segregated part of

the bus or train in America and were barred from entering shops to make their purchases. Their children were sent to the segregated schools where they were racially indoctrinated to accept their dehumanized position; they were taught that the African is by natural and chemical constitution inferior to the White man.

There was yet the second angle to this call on the Africans in Diaspora. It was a call for them to come back and help develop the continent. It is hoped that in this way we could put to an end the problem of brain drain that Africa is suffering from till date so that they would contribute to national development by producing a clear and politically well-founded statement of Pan-Africanist Nationalistic ideas. Unfortunately, the continent has not fared well at all in this area as there is mass exodus of Nigerians to other continents in search of green pastures and in protest of her strangulating economy. From the 1990s till date, Nigeria for example has witnessed an unprecedented migration of her citizens to other nations. This has also resulted in brain drain which has dealt and is dealing a deadly blow on the continent. The insecurity problem in Africa has also posed serious threat to the return of these African Diasporas.

### **Pan-Africanism: A Harbinger of Liberation**

In 1885, the Western powers, namely Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany etc., met in Berlin, Germany, where they partitioned Africa among themselves even without having visited most parts of the continent. FitzGerald (1967:96) wrote the following: “each of the Powers concerned sought to acquire for itself the greatest possible area of territory and, without much scruple, to obstruct its rivals, while the welfare of the native inhabitants was never even considered.” In his separate reaction to the plunder of Africa by Europe, Uzoigwe (1974:90) thus quoted Salisbury:

We are dealing with a conference concerned with the future of Africa, not Europe..... the Berlin conference is the culmination of Europe’s desire – since the beginning of European expansion in the seventeenth century – to impose by force, if need be, its collective will over those of the non-European world, to export its culture and civilization, and above all, to exploit the resources of the world.

With this came the forceful usurpation of the indigenous and familiar leadership styles of the African and enthroning in their stead European systems of government by the Europeans against the will of the Africans. They unleashed untold brutality on the African leaders of the time, killing some, deporting others and reducing the rest of the continent to the speechlessness of a stone.

The Western imposition of rulers on Africa and the concomitant exploitation of her natural resources were unacceptable to the people of African descent led by a host of intelligentsia for the simple fact that it was, according to Bankie (2007) in his "Pan African thought and practise", 'characterized by activities of physical exploitation...accompanied by the ideological torture of racism'. One of the most implacable critics of this Europeans invasion and plunder of Africa was Frantz Fanon the revolutionary Pan-Africanist who hailed from Martinique. According to Ackah (1999), Fanon took the 'liberation call personally to heart and to show his commitment he became physically involved in the struggle to end colonial rule by the French in Algeria just after the second world war'. He is the author of the *Wretched of the Earth*.

### **Pan-Africanism and the Political Unification of the Continent**

This theme is closely linked with that of the liberation of the African continent and is based on the philosophical proposition that united we stand and divided we fall. This policy has the effect of reminding the African nations that hoisting of national flags after independence does not and cannot guarantee freedom to Africans unless they work towards unity as a continent. On this note some Africans were determined to ensure that 'never again shall we be slaves in Africa.' This was the rationale behind the call by Kwame Nkrumah and others for the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) in 1963 and recently the establishment of the African Union (A.U) in 2000–2001. The formation of these organizations was also anchored in the fact that the effect of our individual liberation can only be meaningfully felt when together we stand as one voice to ask for our dues both on the grounds of politics and economics which today more than ever has become the main theme of Pan-Africanism. As noted by Bankie, Nkrumah was of the view that 'the only way to resolve the problems of imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa was the formation of a unitary Socialist government. Moves are on and consultations are taking place on the possibility of a complete metamorphosis of this African Union to the United States of Africa having lost the attempt in Accra, Ghana in July 2007. Today this unification can be seen from the need for Africa to consciously decide what should be appropriated and what should not be appropriated in the name of globalization and environmental justice. Recently the President of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) Ledum Mittee in a conference held in the University of Oxford on 'Pan-Africanism for the New Generation', July, 2011 argued that 'enviromental justice movements across the African continent should create hori-

zontal linkages in order to better protect the interests of threatened peoples and the ecological systems in which they are embedded, and upon which their survival depends.<sup>7</sup>

### **Pan-Africanism: An Agenda To Provide Revisionist Histories**

For a long time history and anthropology books were filled with a lot of claims made about the African by the Whiteman. To the disillusionment of the majority of Africans these anthropological works perjured the African. Pan-Africanism therefore formed a catalyst for the African history to be written by Africans. The aim was to correct the misconceptions and misrepresentations made of Africans by the colonizers.

### **The Relationship Between Pan-Africanism And African Philosophy**

It may be viewed as improper to assert that Pan-Africanism nurtured or resulted in the renaissance of African Philosophy. This is because what is called African philosophy, especially its aspect popularly called or termed Traditional African Philosophy/ethno-philosophical current of African philosophy largely credited to the Ancient and possibly Medieval Periods of the Divisions or History of African philosophy contain thoughts and ideologies seen as originating or emanating from the African way of life. Okere (1983:5) sees this culture as the spring board of a philosophy. He however made a distinction between philosophy understood in that broad perspective and philosophy in the narrow perspective as an organized academic discipline, "a work of pure reason as it steadfastly contemplates upon eternal truth."

However, one can positively assert that the Pan-Africanist Movement helped shape certain African Ideologies which today are found in the ideas and thoughts of the contemporary period of African Philosophy and are still finding expression and relevance in certain 'novel' ideas aimed at the promotion of the same ideals and goals that Pan-Africanism had either sought to achieve or failed to envisage at all. This fact is led credence to by the truism that the philosophies that constitute the contemporary period are seen to be mirroring almost the same themes which the Pan-Africanist movement had promoted or hoped to promote. A typical example is the case of the Ujamaa of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania which called for a unity of purpose among Africans. This unity of purpose was underlined by the term Ujamaa which meant brotherhood, not a brotherhood of people with the same ties of consanguinity but a brotherhood of people who were joined together by



common ties especially united in the strife against a common enemy. The enemy that infringes on the rights of other human beings to realize themselves in being in an atmosphere of freedom and security; the enemy of imperialism that alienates the African from his environment and products of his labour; the enemy that enslaves the African mind and makes the African to see himself as inferior to the white folks, an enemy that organizes injustice against a particular race of humanity; an enemy that enslaved and dehumanized the African at home and in Diaspora; an enemy that is bent on continuing the spate of dehumanization of the African and his world.

Today this same theme of Ujamaa is strongly re-echoed by the metamorphosis of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into African Union and most glaringly in the quest for a single African state not necessarily devoid of boundaries but simply united strongly against the neo-colonialism of the so called developed countries or first world countries. This theme is identifiable in the clarion calls Africans make for the continent to come out of her ape status in the world, the need to chart her own course using indigenous frameworks and methods. Another point of reference could be the case of Leopold Sedar Senghor's Negritude which re-echoed the Pan-African attempt to establish and re-ignite the dignity and achievements of the black race and the move to instill in every African a conscious knowledge of self about who he is and what he has achieved despite all the odds against him. The influence of Leopold Sedar Senghor's Negritude can be seen in the attempt of Africa and Africans to take their rightful places both in world politics and in their personal ambitions and endeavours.

From the foregoing one can derive the fact that the relationship between Pan-Africanism and African Philosophy can be analogically compared to the relationship between a thinker and his thoughts. It is not possible to separate a thinker from his thoughts just as it is not possible that a thinker can achieve anything without thoughts. In this situation African philosophy is the thinker and Pan-Africanism with its many aspects such as ujamaa, negritude, activism etc are the thoughts/ideas without which a thinker (in this case African Philosophy cannot achieve anything). Pan-Africanism, therefore serves as the necessary nexus between the thinker and the changes/development that he sets out to achieve.

Philosophy is life because it trades on ideas. These ideas are the vehicles for the sustenance of man's life. However, these ideas center not only on the environment. Rather, they spring from man's interactions with his environment. The African environment is replete with the history of slave trade, slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, globalization and privatization. All these were/are instruments of dehumanization and subjugation of the African by his colonizers. Today, the African consciousness can be aptly described as a living confluence of the expe-

riences of organized colonization and subjugation. For the African to evolve from these humiliating and debilitating experiences he needs a philosophy of emancipation. This philosophy of emancipation will require that he becomes consciously aware of his past through his free exercise of the benefits of hindsight; he will underscore the areas where he did not do well, he will then make a commitment to plan ahead through a deciphering of the difference between a genuine gift and the Trojan horse. Pan-Africanism therefore is the vehicle for the African to fully situate himself in the present global situation and to fashion out the best means to achieve a complete liberation from the shackles of slavery and exocentrism which his contact with the Western world has foisted on him.

In this sense, one can necessarily see the birth and activities of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Pan-Africanist Movement as heralding the coming of the contemporary era of African philosophy. This contemporary era will trade on ideas. Ideologies and thoughts would be propounded with the singular aim of liberating the African, hitherto ensnared and shackled by numerous vices and problems which were products of colonialism, neo-colonialism, exocentric stance, ape status or some other byproducts of indiscriminate acceptance of Trojan gifts.

### **Conclusion**

At this point therefore, it deserves to be stated that African Philosophy is still an apologetic philosophy and will remain so until all fetters of slavery have been removed. However, this does not entail hatred but a spirit of dialogue where the superior reason should prevail over shallow reasoning, and where the understanding of man as a being – with cannot be undermined. Africa will meet up with the rest of the world if and only if she puts on her thinking cap and develops indigenous frameworks that will enable her realize her full potentials. This is the essential task that African philosophers must perform for the continent.

### **Summary**

Pan-Africanism was a movement developed by the African people in the wake of their struggle for recognition of their humanity, dignity and equality with the rest of the world that had battered them. This movement had among other objectives the unification of Africa, a return to Africa by people of African descent living in the Diaspora and universal expression of black pride and

achievement. It was also seen as the harbinger of liberation. The onus of this research work is to assess the success or not of this movement of the African by the African and for the African with a view to showing if appreciable success has been recorded especially as it affects the objective of ensuring a return of the Africans in Diaspora to the continent. This paper seeks to highlight areas where the African of today needs to address in order to bring to fruition the benefits expected of the Pan African Movement. It also seeks to establish in very clear terms that the African has a lot of work to do or else he will more than ever before be swallowed up by the West through an unbridled acceptance without scrutiny of the agents of globalization.

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