

Review Paper

Globalization and the future of African culture

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No man is an island to himself. In the same logic, no nation is an island to herself. In the process of international interactions, there is an interaction of cultures and thus, a borrowing and diffusion of cultures amongst nations. This is in itself not unusual. But unusual and unfortunate is the domination of one culture over the other. This is an evil, an evil of forced acculturation. This is true of globalization which has generated a lot of controversy with regards to the rise of a global culture. In the rise of a global culture, Western norms and practices are gradually being transported across the globe as the standard and acceptable way of behavior. Africa is the hardest hit in this regard. The hitherto rich, cherished and dynamic African culture has been diluted if not totally eclipsed. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to outline and critically assess the impact of globalization on African culture. In its analysis, the paper concludes that, Africa is fast running the risk of cultural atrophy consequent of the current logic of globalization. Thereafter, the paper proposes strategies for stemming the tide of cultural atrophy of the African culture in the midst of the purported rise of a global culture.

Key word: African culture, globalization, global culture, cultural atrophy, Western norms.

INTRODUCTION

“No man is an island to himself”. Likewise, no nation is an island to herself. In the process of international interactions, there is an interaction of cultures and thus, a borrowing and diffusion of cultures amongst nations. This is in itself not unusual. But unusual and unfortunate is the domination of one culture over the other. This is an evil, an evil of forced acculturation (Ekwuru, 1999). This is true of globalization which has generated a lot of controversy with regards to the rise of a global culture in which Western life is being adopted as the normal way of life. However, in the assessment of the impact of globalization on individuals, nations and the global world, many scholars, opinion leaders and political analysts etc. have expressed divergent and dissenting views. While they all agree that globalization has a political, economic, cultural and even religious impact on individuals, nations and the world at large, they however, disagree on the nature and extent of this impact. While some argue that it is all positive, some believe that it has nothing but negative impacts. Yet others see it as being both positive and negative (Kwame, 2007). Be that as it may, focus in this paper on the cultural impact of globalization on Africa with particular reference to Nigeria. With regard to the

nature and extent of the impact of globalization, this paper is not oblivious of the positive effects; rather it argues that the negative effects of globalization have been much more than its positive effects on Africans. Personal assessment reveals here that, if pressing measures are not taken, perhaps African culture will soon run into extinction. However, an effort has been made in this paper to strategize on how to stem the tide of cultural atrophy of the African culture in the midst of a rising global culture.

If the various nuances and interpretations of the term globalization reveal interaction and integration of the people and nations into a common system; if the central idea of globalization is interaction and integration, then the term globalization is not new to Africa and the world at large. At various times and in various circumstances, Africa has interacted with the rest of the world. That was in the historical moments of trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, post-colonialism and the present age of current globalization.

At these various times and circumstances, Africa's experiences in economics, politics and culture have been worrisome, particularly her cultural experiences. What are

these experiences? What must Africa and Africans do vis-à-vis these experiences. These and more shall engage the interest of this paper.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS: GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE

According to Ogoko (2007), the political idea of globalization is the aggregation of compliant nations of the world into a community wherein their territorial boundaries dissolve into ideological insignificance while retaining their political sovereignty as independent nations. In principle the countries remain sovereign and autonomous, but in practice the restrictions, the obstacles, cross border problems etc. that tend to hinder easy integration and cooperation amongst nations that are cleared; cross border flow of capitals, goods and services and other social activities that encourage full integration and cooperation are encouraged. There is total trade liberation but only as a scheme to re-determine the fate of other nations. In his definition of the term globalization, Nsibami (2001) incorporates five concepts definitive of globalization. According to him, globalization is a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and people facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices. He adds that globalization is not a value free, innocent, self-determining process. It is an international, socio-politico-economic and cultural permeation process facilitated by policies of government, private corporations, international agencies and civil society organizations. In line with this definition, Kwame Yeboah (2007) understands globalization as a 'process of linking regions and/or nations of the world which is facilitated by information flow (communication) inducing changes in the pre-existing socio-cultural, political, economic etc, structures and systems of nations and peoples'.

Be that as it may, in this paper, globalization is defined as a process of bringing together the compliant nations of the world under a global village with socio-politico and economico-cultural interaction, integration, diffusion and give and take facilitated by information flow and perhaps for the enhancement of the global world. The choice of the word 'perhaps' in this definition is significant and revealing. It is difficult to ascertain whether globalization absolutely brings about the enhancement of the global world. The experiences, particularly in Africa, have shown its severe negative consequences in such an intense manner that hardly anyone remembers its advantages. This perhaps, accounts for the reason why some have defined it from a negative perspective. Aborishade (2002) maintains that globalization is Western imperialism, particularly American imperialism that seeks to impose its hegemony on other subjugated and exploited nations'

threat of economic, political or military coercion. To him, globalization does not only deepen inequality between the core and the periphery nations, it also seeks to wage unprecedented attacks on the right and welfare of the poor nations. Others classify globalization in the same category with colonialism, imperialism and modernization.

From the above nuances and interpretations of globalization, the logic and the demands of globalization is that, whatever the nature of their economies, their level of development, and whatever their location in the global economy, all countries must pursue a common set of economic policies and strategies. In particular, they must permit the free and indiscriminate operations of transnational corporation in their economies; open their economies freely and indiscriminately to imports and concentrate on exporting what they are supposed to be good at, reduce the role of governments in the economy to that of supporting the market and private enterprise, and leave the determination of prices of goods, currencies, labour as well as the allocation of resources to the operation of the market, something that is called as the 'free-market' or 'laissez faire' economy. In the light of the above, Fridah Muyale-Manenji argues that, globalization is primarily not an impersonal process driven by laws and factors of development, such as technology – operating outside of the human control and agency. Rather, it is a conscious programmed of reconstructing international economic and political relations in line with a particular set of interests (the profit motivations of businesses, especially the transnational corporations of the advanced industrial countries) and vision (the dogma of the primacy of the free market and of private enterprise in all processes of human development) (Fridah, 1998).

On the other hand, culture is very much an elusive term to define, perhaps because of its wider scope and broad nature. However, what comes to the mind while thinking of culture is values and norms people have which make them live in a particular way. It is a way of living in a particular community. It is therefore, the sum total of all things that refer to religion, roots of people, symbols, languages, songs, stories, celebrations, clothing and dressing, and all expressions of our way of life. It encompasses food productions, technology, architecture, kinship, the interpersonal relationships, political and economic systems and all the social relationships these entail. One truth about culture is that it is learned. Such learning does not take place through natural inheritance. It is not genetically transmitted. Rather, it takes place by a process of absorption from the social environment or through deliberate instruction, or through the process of socialization. If culture is learned, it may follow to say that, it can equally be unlearned. If it follows, then, Africa has a lot to unlearn (those western values that are alien and destructive to the African culture) from the contact with the west. However, this does not suggest that Africa has nothing good to learn from the west. Indeed, there are many.

Another truth about culture is that it is dynamic. Culture is never static. Every now and then we are being transformed culturally. It changes exactly the same way as human beings change. This transformation is so gradual and not sudden or abrupt. According to Fridah (1998), culture is a continuous process of change but in spite of the change, culture continues to give a community a sense of identity, dignity, continuity, security and binds society together. The dynamism of culture casts doubt on the possibility of a global culture. Part of this dynamism is that each culture has its own personality. The fact that, we are all humans does not mean that we are all the same. To ignore this, would mean to destroy God's own beautiful rainbow made from the many colours of cultural diversity. But central to globalization is the idea of a global culture (Guillen, 2001). However, there are only a few scholars who accept that a global culture is in the making. A "culture ideology of consumerism" -driven by symbols, images, and anaesthetic of the lifestyles and self-image – has spread throughout the world and is having some momentous effects including standardization of tastes and desires (Guillen,2001; Leslie,1991).

I see the romanticizing of the idea of a global culture as a false fantasy. If culture means a collective mode of life, or a repertoire of beliefs, styles, values and symbols, then we can only speak of cultures not just (one) culture, for a collective mode of life presupposes different modes and repertoires. To this end, Smith (1990) argues that, the idea of a global culture is practical impossibility, except in interplanetary terms.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Actually, globalization is not a new concept to Africa. Scholars believe that there has been three major phases of globalization: 1870 -1914, 1945 -1980 and from 1980 till now (Ajayi, 2003). However, this idea depends on how one defines globalization. Africa's contact with other parts of the world especially America and Europe started in the 15th century through trade including the trans-Atlantic slave trade. During this period, western merchants bought from African slave traders Africa's most valuable resources (able-bodied men, women and children). Africa never remained the same from this point. It significantly altered the course of Africa histo-culturally and politico-economically. Compared with the devastating experience of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which considerably depopulated the Africans, colonialism represents a higher and more disastrous form of slavery. George Ekwuru (1999) calls it 'the "deculturation" and "depersonalization" of a people within their own land'. With the exploitation and instrumentalisation of the colonized as its main objective, colonialism was nothing other than a suppressive form of territorial cultural slavery. Therefore, like any other form of slavery, it was a blighted system

that was notably as dehumanizing as it was highly oppressive. This accounts for the perduring effect of its horribly debilitating experience, which has continued to surface as a terrible nightmare of inferiority on the cultural psyche of the colonized. Because of this avowed ideology of exploitation, which largely characterized the entire system of colonial rule, some scholars define it as essentially "a system of political, economic, and cultural domination forcibly imposed by a technologically advanced foreign minority on an indigenous majority" (Geller, 1995). In the historical moment of colonialism, through the process of forced acculturation, western civilization came heavily on the African cultural world bringing about a battering and shattering experience and an irreparable cultural trauma. Writing on the effect of colonialism on African culture from the Igbo (Nigerian) experience, Ekwuru states:

What is regarded as the conquest of the traditional culture is that point in history when the whirlwind of the cross-current of western civilization battered and shattered the ancient crust of the traditional Igbo cultural world- a phenomenon that let loose the floodgate of western cultural aggression and permitted the avalanche of the modernist value system and lifestyle to fall on the entire Igbo cultural world. After this great epochal event that took a few decades to accomplish, all was not the same again (Ekwuru, 1999). Again, from the Igbo perspective of the rape of African culture, Chinua Achebe (1958) dramatizes this episode in his celebrated novel, "Things Fall Apart". The Igbo people stood still to watch their ancestral cultural universe battered by the ravaging hurricane of death, and being laid to rest in the mass tomb of eternal oblivion. In this novel, the impetuous "Okonkwo" could not allow that to happen in his face. As it were, he tried to overstep the bounds of one man's regimentary defense as the warrior of the old world; he wanted to hold fate by the throat, but was highly overcome by the force of a strange god from the white man's world. "Okonkwo" could not dream of living in a world that has lost its pristine flavour of the past, and quickly, and in the most abnormal way "forced" his way into the ancestral domain through suicide, to register his protest in the land of the Living-dead. The colonial conquest led to the rapid decline of the various elements of the traditional cultural world. As observed and rightly put by Geller, 'Although the imposition of colonial rule eventually led to the abolition of slavery and establishment of peace, it also meant the end of African political, economic and cultural autonomy. "The transformation of elites and masses alike into colonial subjects with few political and civil rights, foreign economic domination and decline and denigration of traditional authority and values" (Geller, 1995).

Writing on the impact of colonialism (which is an earlier form of globalization) on African culture, Kwame Yeboah (2007) points out that over-reliance on Western education as a result of colonialism have created a distorted value

system. The colonial initiated education as prestige economy gained support by wider society. State approved farming scheme gave way to cash crops as opposed to traditional food farming at the expense of local food security. Farming activity became menial and was reserved for the largely uneducated and the unskilled nationals. English language fluency was mistaken for intelligence. Ability to write and speak in the colonial master's language was taken for being educated. Among other example, government accountability to its citizenry did not matter if it enjoyed international recognition (goodwill) by maintaining the colonial status quo. Formal education became a passport for gaining prestige, hence competition for places in higher education translated into competition for prestige. The local languages became outmoded and displaced. Colonialism eroded the place of African languages in African economies by granting the highest prestige value to school education in colonial languages. Colonial languages were valued over and above African languages. Consequently, educational qualification in an African language became of less value than qualification in the colonial language. Human development then became valuable only when it was acquired in the colonial power's language and ability became only valuable to "the national development effort" if acquired in the colonial master's languages.

Today, it has been observed that the rapid and aggressive spread of market economies and communication technologies under the influence of western multinationals brings new impediments to local cultures and values, particularly in Africa and non-western societies at large. Nigerians in particular are now cultivating the materialistic and individualistic habits and values previously associated with western culture. The culture of individualism is fast eroding the values and ideals of the extended family system which Nigerians are known for (Obioha, 2008). Excessive materialism, for instance, has changed the religious character of the traditional Igbos (of Nigeria). The traditional Igbos was a truly and deeply religious people of whom it can be said, as it has been said of Hindu, that they eat religiously and drink religiously. But certainly, today, the reverse is the case; the texture of the modern Igbo cultural life is excessively materialistic. The glory of a religious cultural aura and vision of life, which characterized the traditional life, has disappeared from the characterological features of modern Igbo life. The change, as observed from a cultural anthropological point of view, has been a radical switch over from one extreme of a deeply religious social character to another of excessive materialism.

In this frenetic rush for wealth, the quest for profit with the desire for prestige has accelerated the desire to consume. This is how Ali (1980) puts it, "The African capitalism by combining the quest for profit with the desire for prestige has combined in sharpening the acquisitive instinct alongside the urge to consume.

Whenever possible the interest in loud and expensive cars, ostentatious dwellings, luxurious parties and entertainment, has been a concurrent feature in Nigeria, as in Kenya, in the Ivory coast as in Zaire". For the present day Igbo, what gives meaning to the worth of any human person is not "what he is" by virtue of his education, but "what he possesses". In the light of this, Chukwudum (1994) asserts that: "All that matters for the Nigerian is naira acquisition, the easier, perhaps, the fouler the means, the better for him". He further concludes that "consumer rather than productive consciousness has laid deadly siege on the Nigerian mind". All these have come as a result of the structural change in the world economy, globalization and the alarming increase of goods dumped on African countries that are market by mass seductive advertisement which is blatantly superficial but nonetheless successful in creating desires in peoples of traditional societies (Akande, 2002). It has not only affected the kind of food we eat, it has also affected the kind and mode of our dressing. Today in Africa, most women dress half-naked while their male counterparts braid their hairs, put on earrings and nose-rings and wear torn clothes or rags all in the name of fashion. Generally, globalization has brought about the decline of the traditional world, the undoing of the old cultural set-up, and the rapid erosion of old values. The African culture therefore, is fast running into extinction and something must be done to stop this. This is the focus of the next section of the paper.

STRATEGIES FOR STEMMING THE TIDE OF CULTURAL ATROPHY OF THE AFRICAN CULTURE

A cursory look at the history of African culture as a continent would certainly reveal that the entire region is rapidly undergoing a rudimentary phase of Cultural Revolution. Indeed, this revolution is both positive and negative. Positive because some of the hitherto sacrosanct cultural practices that depict nothing but irrational worldviews and belief systems, outdated customs and practices that constitute a bane to the development of the populace in the region and are fast becoming unattractive and actually phasing out. Thanks to the contact with the west in historical moments of colonialism and current globalization. It has indeed brought about cultural renaissance. Negative on the other hand, because our age long cherished traditions and valuable customs are rapidly going into extinction. If in this so-called global integration (globalization) we lose what defines us, then we are lost as a people and as a continent. It is already happening and has generated with it a crisis of identity amongst Africans and Nigerians in particular.

As a response to this, scholars have written volumes stating and defending what defines us as a people. L.

Senghor's Negritude, J. Nyerere's Ujamaa, Izu Marcel Onyeocha's communalism just to mention a few are such efforts. It can be told with utmost guarantee and belief that, an appreciable progress has not been made because as the saying goes, 'prevention is better than cure'. When it is successfully restored, what defines Africans as a people would be seen and known by the world and definitely, that will save fellow Africans from the stress of searching for and defending their identity. How do we achieve this, the restoration of the indigenous/local culture? This is the focus of this section of the paper. No doubt, Africa indeed needs a cultural renaissance. The contact of the Africans with the west through colonialism and globalization has shown several negative impacts. It is much more in magnitude than the benefit; the African people would have got out of such contacts. The swallowing up of African culture by the western culture has generated the erosion of cherished values and virtues of life amongst all Africans. George Ekwuru calls this the evil of forced acculturation (Ekwuru, 1999). Usually, in a normal wheel of cultural evolution, when two cultures come into intensive contact, a gradual process of mutual cultural borrowing is observed to take place, whereby each of the two cultures, consciously or unconsciously, tends to take something of the other. But in a case, where one of the two cultures demonstrate a domineering posture over the other, due to its highly developed techniques and media of expression, the weaker one is lured into an extensive act of cultural borrowing.

This process of cultural borrowing in the dynamic process of inter-cultural contact is called acculturation. In a normal process of cultural evolution, acculturation is considered as an essential dynamic medium for cross-cultural diffusion and development. But in a situation in which the process of acculturation is forcefully brought upon a society - a situation, in which a highly developed society imposes certain elements of its culture on the other, thereby forcing it to derail from its unique track of cultural civilization, leads to a situation of cultural disorder. This is presently the African experience. Through heavy and sophisticated technologies expressed, for instance, in communication technologies of the internet pornography and other media advertisement etc, western culture has come heavily on African culture and the later is ferociously gulping everything without caution. There is therefore, urgent need for a cultural appraisal of the African experience.

Be that as it may, in providing the strategies for this cultural renaissance, the role of philosophy cannot be overemphasized. We shall bring to bear the philosophical tools of criticisms and analysis as we chart the strategies for the much needed cultural renaissance that will save the cherished cultural heritage from extinction. However, in other for this to succeed, efforts should be made to remove certain 'cobwebs' in the cultural practices that have been existing in the African societies since long.

Certainly, not all the traditional practices are worth keeping in this cultural evolution. There are aspects of the African culture that have constituted a bane to the development of society and personality. There is no gainsaying the fact that, the primary goal of modern African societies is that of development. According to Bodunrin (1985), the key to the realization of this goal "in the contemporary world is science and technology". Science and technology are defined by attitudes of the mind such as "freedom of enquiry, openness to criticism, a general type of skepticism and fallibilism and non-veneration of authorities" (Bodunrin, 1985). Hence, for Africa to develop there is the need to jettison or modify aspects of traditional culture that impede the development of these attitudes.

Part of the weakness of the traditional African culture is that it is authoritarian. Being authoritarian it does not, as Wiredu observes, place much premium "on curiosity in those of tender age or independence of thought in those of more considerable years (Wiredu, 1980). The traditional culture lacks the habit of exactness, and rigor in thinking, the pursuit of systematic coherence and the experimental approach (Wiredu, 1980: 32). The dearth of these qualities in Africa is largely responsible for her scientific and technological backwardness in comparison to her western counterparts. Wiredu further illustrates this point well using the examples of a typical African mechanic and the traditional African practice of pharmacology. In these examples, he tries to establish that the lack of a culture of logical precision and accuracy, an essential prerequisite for scientific-technological advancement, in the traditional African way of doing things stands as an impediment to development in Africa and also hinders the ability of people to benefit fully from technological advancement. Besides, the dogmatic acceptance of beliefs about the nature of reality, man and society, which characterized many primitive cultures also negate the cultivation of an attitude of rational and consistent inquiry that is requisite for scientific enterprise. To rectify this, a good foundation in philosophy and more specifically, logic is needed in at least our secondary and post-secondary school curriculum. This would certainly facilitate the cultivation of a spirit of rational investigation, rigor in thinking and the culture of logical precision necessary for development.

Another deficiency is that, the traditional African culture is oral. As a result, it does not give much room for the development of the features of the scientific mind already mentioned. This is how Hountondji puts it:

"Oral tradition favours the consolidation of knowledge into dogmatic, intangible system. It is dominated by the fear of forgetting, of lapses of memory, since here memory is left on its own resources bereft of external or material support. This forces people to hoard their memory

jealously, to recall them constantly to repeat them continually, accumulating and heaping them up in a global wisdom, simultaneously present, always ready to be applied, and perpetually available. In these conditions the mind is too preoccupied with preserving knowledge to find freedom to criticize it (Hountondji, 1983:103).

The above mentioned are some of the 'cobwebs' to be cleared from the traditional African culture to enable the African people come out of cultural ridicule, authenticate their humanity in the committee of nations and to contribute meaningfully in the global quest for development. On the one hand, we have seen what the critical and analytic tradition of philosophy can do with regard to unattractive traditional practices. Subsequently, the strategies of cultural selectiveness and alignment can be recommended, and a common language can be promoted as the national language in the case of Nigeria, which is the immediate cultural environment in the analysis of this paper.

Every society is known for and defined by a particular culture or cultural practices. Culture is not universal concept. Culture is society/geographically -based and at the same time dynamic. The destruction of a culture is the destruction of the society which such culture defines. No culture can claim absolute sufficiency. There is something every culture lacks but which it needs, thus, the practice of cultural borrowing between and among cultures. However, in the process of cultural borrowing, there is need for each society to have the right cultural appetite guided by the rational needs of the society per time. The cultural needs of societies differ, therefore, the need for societies to cultivate the right appetite. This will help them to rationally select the right cultures that conduce to their destinies and aspirations in the process of cultural diffusions and borrowing. In the contact of the Africans with the west, not all their ways of life is culturally harmless. For instance, traditionally, Africa cherishes and values communalism, extended family system, and respect for elders, chastity, and modesty in dressing without revealing one's sensitive body parts (especially the women). Traditional Africa abhors the idea of unwed mothers, pre-marital sex and public romance either by married couple or unmarried partners, the phenomenon of foster homes and the presence of street children. And these are virtues that are responsible for moral decorum and rectitude in traditional African society and vices that are responsible for moral degeneracy in the African society. What the traditional African society abhors and frowns at (with regards to the aforementioned), is rather what obtains as a normal way of life in the west? Sadly enough, these are fast becoming a way of life amongst Africans. In the contact with the west, Africans have failed as a people to rationally select only the aspects of western culture that can

complement their society's quest for development. As it is observed, Africans have rather fallen victims of irrational consummation of all of western culture. The African society is fast running into cultural extinction if the tide is not checked. The Africans do not only eat the western food, wear western clothes, speak western language, but also eat like westerners, dress like westerners, and speak like westerners.

We can however, strengthen our culture by 'cultural adaptation and alignment'. Instead of copying a foreign culture in toto, we can rather do that with modifications and innovations. For instance, when Alexander the great sacked Alexandria, he took away both materials and techniques back to Rome. A lot of the books taken away from Egypt were unintelligible to the Greeks who were not initiated into the Egyptian mysteries upon which the intelligibility of the books depended. In fact, the environment was not totally conducive for such ideas since the ordinary Greeks/Romans were not very receptive to strange doctrines. Those, like Socrates and Jesus Christ who tried to popularize strange doctrines were disliked, persecuted and killed. However, the Greeks/Romans grew into a political and economic power because they aligned whatever foreign ideas that found its way into their territory to the culture of the environment. The Greek spirit of free enquiry helped them to refine the little of the Egyptian mysteries they could understand and tolerate and this sent them on the way to greatness.

According to Ibanga (1999), the transformation of America from the rural back-water of Europe into the leader of the world, was by this principle. The Americans did not passively internalize the knowledge that they brought from Europe. Neither did they strive to follow the European footsteps in everything they did. They rather introduced the philosophy of pragmatism whereby, every knowledge had to prove its worth in practice and this helped them to overtake Europe in development. In the Japanese-western cultural integration, the Japanese did not passively internalize western capitalist structures and methods but refined aspects of capitalism with features from its own culture. The cultural passion for efficiency, both in instrument and technique has contributed to the greatness of Japan. The concepts of *Ikigai* (what makes life worth living) and *Hatarakigai* (what makes work worth doing) are concepts from traditional Japanese heritage which play a significant role in contemporary Japanese capitalism. Commenting on one such feature of Japanese cultural heritage that has found its way into modern Japanese capitalism, Charles Sheldon writes that:

Paternalism as it exists today in the Japanese economy has been adopted and adapted from a combination of Confucian ideology, a strong established tradition of ideas and practices and the realization which dawn early in the process of industrialization that benevolence could be

advantageous (Sheldon, 1984).

Again, we should not look down on some aspects of our culture due to castigations and aspersions on us by those who are not part of the culture. To look down on one's culture is to discard what defines one and worst still discards one's capacity for development for one's development is tied to one's culture. This, however, does not mean that obsolete practices should be revived just for the fun of it, but rather ennobling aspects of the indigenous African culture can be promoted to give it a lift amongst other cultures of the world. For instance, the relationship of the African to time is that of an unsavory comment. The African is always seen as not respecting time. He is seen as neither being able to keep appointments nor relate to time in the same way that the European does.

However, it is not needed to drop the concept of time altogether because of this unsavory comment. Although this may be true (and to that extent we ought to change our attitude to time), but it is always the negative aspect of this culture that is emphasized. Nobody seems to notice that the African farmer leaves for his farm before dawn or that the African trader will sell his wares at any time of the day or night so long as there is a customer. This is however, a disregard for time that is positive. By it, the farmer and the trader increase their output and in the case of the trader someone gets service at a time when it would have been impossible in western cultures. This is a positive aspect which can be promoted in other to strengthen the African culture. More so, the African culture of the extended family has been a subject of castigation because of its tendency to deplete business capital, yet the fact that, the extended family contributes to the psychological comfort of the individual as he ventures into business risks is not considered. There is always the feeling that, if one fails at such a venture, the family is there to fall back on. There is also the free labour that one sometimes obtains from the extended family in the course of building a business (Ikpe, 1999). These are aspects of the communalist culture that can be promoted to strengthen the cultural traditions of Africa and the chances of development as a nation and continent.

Another way through which we can stem the tide of cultural atrophy is to promote a common language. The case of Nigeria can be used as a point. Language has a very intimate relationship with culture. This attitude is expressed by Daniel Bell when he writes that:

...particular languages embody distinctive ways of experiencing the world, of defining what we are. That is, we not only speak in particular languages, but more fundamentally become the persons we become because of the particular language community in which we grow up. Language above all else, shapes our distinctive

ways of being in the world. Language then is a carrier of people's identity, the vehicle of a certain way of seeing things, experiencing and feeling, determinant of particular outlooks on life (Bell, 1993).

If a lost language is a lost culture and a lost culture is an invaluable knowledge lost, then efforts should be made to develop a common language- WA-ZO-BIA (which is a combination of the languages of the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria. WA- is Yoruba, ZO - is Hausa and BIA - is Igbo) or strengthen the already existing local languages. However, the experience in Nigeria today is a gradual phasing away of the traditional languages and the enthronement of the English language in every facet of lives. English language has become the official language of Nigeria both in private and public life. We are born into it, we are taught with it, we dress with it, we eat with it, we live with it, and we may possibly die with it. Yet we are defending our identity. Can we have an identity in the midst of language crisis? That is what every Nigerian would ask!

Today, it is rare to have students who willingly enroll to study any of the local/indigenous languages in the higher institutions unless such courses are given to them against their choices. Those who see themselves studying them are not proud of it. Scholarships and other forms of incentives are never given to them; rather the government can spend millions of naira on incentives to those studying foreign languages such as English, French, German, or science subjects. Consequently, educational qualification in any of the local languages has become of less value than qualification in the colonial languages because of the influence the imperial countries exert over Africa in general and Nigeria in particular as a result of their science supported civilization. To get out of this misnomer, we recommend that the local language experts (of the three major languages in Nigeria) should come together and develop a language to be called 'WA-ZO-BIA'. This language when developed should be taught in all levels of the education system. If such is achieved, it will break the walls of ethnicity, it will make inter-tribal marriages easier and attractive since the language barrier (which is often a major fear and impediment to inter-tribal marriages) would have been transcended. With this it will be easier to speak with one voice as a nation and as a people.

Equally, important (in the bid to save the culture from extinction) is the use of culture and cultural institutions to address global problems facing societies. For instance, tapping on traditional medicine and knowledge systems to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS. We call for people to eat more of the traditional African diets instead of expensive, genetically-modified foods that are imported from the west. The native foods have proved to be healthy, nutritious and accessible. An increase on consumption of the native foods will not only catalyze and increase

international trade in such commodities and help to economically empower our people, but will also help to retain the cultural tradition of the region and sell it to the world. It is therefore, an appeal to the governments, NGOs and all concerned groups to sponsor television and radio programmed on the teaching on how to cook the local foods. All these strategies, if vigorously pursued will surely help to stem the tide of cultural atrophy of the African culture.

CONCLUSION

The need for a cultural renaissance of the African experience is a product of the current cultural evolution engendered by the cultural contacts of Africans with the west in historical moments of colonialism and globalization. This cultural contact has brought about a forced acculturation that has left the rich cultural heritage of Africa in a precarious condition of imminent extinction. This is the result of the research made possible through the application of philosophical tools of criticisms and analysis. This has shown that, philosophy as a discipline that still plays an important role in the quest for cultural renaissance. More so, we observe that a lost culture is a lost society as well as an invaluable knowledge lost. To this extent, certain strategies are recommended that will stem the tide of cultural atrophy amidst global cultural challenges. The need to have the right cultural appetite that will help every African to select the right culture that conduce to their destiny as a people, the practice of cultural adaptation and alignment and the development and promotion of a common language are some of such strategies that will help in the right direction. However, it is not claimed that, these are the only ways through which the quest for the right cultural renaissance can be achieved. This is just a perspective-contribution to the quest. Other ways can possibly be explored. At the end of it, can be concluded by saying that a passionate, vigorous and committed application of these strategies will surely stem the tide of cultural atrophy of the African cultural heritage.

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