

**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Social Sciences**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Department of Philosophy**

**The Contribution of African Philosophy in Challenging Western  
Hegemony and Globalization**

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**August 2016**  
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## **Lists of Acronyms**

[nd.]	unspecified date of Publication
[s. l.]	unspecified publisher
ACR	African Cultural Revolution
AU	African Union
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PAN	Pan African Nationalism
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the contribution of African philosophy in challenging the impacts of Western hegemony and globalization on Africa. Since Western philosophy claims the “universality” of its philosophy, culture, science and technology, some racist Western philosophers pledge to provide this to Africa as part of their “civilizing mission” because they argue that Africa has no civilization. Nowadays, this notion, supported by globalization, assumes a hegemonic place in Africa. The thesis, examines the impacts of globalization which has increased the cultural, political and economic problems of the continent which require the contribution of African philosophy to be resolved. In so doing, qualitative method is used by analyzing relevant secondary sources collected from books, book sections, and journal articles. The thesis argued that African philosophy as such uses critical analysis, synthesis, and criticism to resolve problems facing the people of the continent. So, the African philosophical approach should be used to sort out and do away with African problems. Most importantly, recognizing and grabbing the contributions of African traditional values and thoughts that can go hand in hand with the achievements of globalization is vital, for Western science and technology alone are so local, and not enough for the betterment of Africa. Based on this, the thesis suggested that both the West and Africa should take part in cross-cultural communications so as to create understanding about the pluralistic nature of cultures and the significance of African traditional values and thoughts. This, in turn, empowers African philosophers, the people, governments, and concerned bodies to work on Africanization via rediscovering African identity.

**Keywords:** African Philosophy, Western Philosophy, civilizing mission, Westernization, Globalization, Intercultural approach, Africanization.

## Introduction

Given Western philosophy's claims to "universality," most of its authors pledge to offer it to the rest of the world as the only means to disclose their evils. Besides, it proclaims that the white race is "a superior" race endowed with reason dedicated to "civilize" the rest of the human race. Some racist Western philosophers make a distinction between human races: "superior" and "inferior", "black" and "white" etc., which finally denies the humanity of Africans. Proponents of this philosophy are Aristotle, G.W. F. Hegel, Immanuel Kant and David Hume. Also, the "logic of evolutionism" assumes that "Africans were mentally equivalent to children and therefore could not produce art, religion, language, writing, literature, or political structures as advanced as those of the West" (Keim, 2009, p. 53). This is the point of departure of Western philosophy to propose the "civilizing mission" worthy of Africa's redemption from traditional lives. The mission causes colonization of Africa and later colonialism has been done away with the idea of globalization<sup>1</sup>, yet the project of the "civilizing mission" hitherto continues in Africa in the name of the westernizing project. Some writers explain this situation as Neocolonialism (Workineh, 2009), which helps the West to keep going dominating the continent because globalization interacts Africa with its former colonizers. Globalization in this thesis is discussed as a challenge of Africa without denying its benefits to the development of the continent.

Globalization is the system that recognizes the interdependence of sovereign states on various global issues (Bornman, 2003; Mittelman, 2000; Umezurike, 2009; Lawson, 2010). However, since the West assumed hegemony in the global system via its "superior" culture, philosophy and science, states remain divided as the dominant and the marginalized. The West remains the dominant player of globalization and continues extending itself to the rest of the world with the ambition to universalize its local values. With regard to this, globalization "implies

universalization, harmonization, and homogeneity, which ultimately result in the marginalization of African values, institutions, and norms” (Makinda and Okumu, 2008, p. 4). The association of globalization as such is reasonable because the West remains a forerunner and the non-Western hemisphere becomes the symbolic representation facing Westernization as a serious impact. Globalization is, thus, a channel that pronounces Western values, science, and ideology, which are dominating the global system and affecting traditional values of “Others<sup>ii</sup>”.

Africa is the continent facing Western hegemony and the devastating impacts of globalization, since the emergence of Europe-Africa relationship. The “civilizing mission” was the “policy” that determined the relationship, and nowadays, the mission aims at Westernizing Africa with Western values, science, and ideology. On the ground of this, the development of African states seems to depend on the intervention of the West with its solutions. African states accept this without inquiry, and they get aside the advantages of indigenous values and solutions at hand. The impact of Western values and ideologies on the African social, cultural, economic, political, religious lives and traditional values is not explored. As a result, “most of the Western values in an African place become alternatives that African states have not chosen” (Bekele, 2007, p. 108).

In light of the foregoing paragraphs, the thesis gives details about the break and continuity of Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization on African mental, cultural and economic conditions. Although the benefits of globalization are undeniable, the continent is hitherto a marginal player in globalization. Westernization is the devastating challenge of the continent, which embraces the benefits of globalization. Westernization is the counterpart of the “civilizing mission”, and it is the universal attempt of the West, which affects and alters African sociocultural, political and economic aspects. In addition, the attempt puts the commonly shared values such as humanity, social justice, freedom and equality in question. Globalization fails to overcome

problems related to this because it only reflects occidental culture, science, and philosophy. This caused a fierce contention between the West and Africa, which demonstrates false Universalism<sup>iii</sup>. Based on this, African philosophy needs to suggest a possible way to create a proportion between Western science and important traditional values of Africa. This is important to achieve the goal of challenging the hegemony and the impacts of globalization, i.e. Westernization. The thesis argued, achieving such a goal requires being equipped with an African philosophy which helps to recognize African solutions to overcome the Westernization impacts of globalization. This, in turn, empowers the people of Africa to make their traditional values and Western achievements proportional in realizing the Renaissance of the continent.

Central to the thesis is exploring the impossibility of the Westernizing and the universalizing thesis of the West because it faced multidirectional resistances both from Africa and others. My claim, then, is that in the contemporary global system the achievements of indigenous knowledge, traditional values and principles and cultures of “Others” are not welcomed. With regard to this, the thesis explored the contribution of African philosophy in the rectification of the problems of the continent. Western solutions should not be seen as the only ways to overcome African problems. This is to mean that the essentials of African philosophy, which are rooted in African traditional values are important. Therefore, to overcome problems that the people of the continent are facing via globalization, African philosophy has pragmatic functions (Messay, 2004; Obenga, 2004; Presbey, 2002; Bekele, 1998; Chukwu, 2002; Ogutu, 2002).

The primary task of African philosophy to overcome such problems is by responding to the universality claims of Western discourses, which are basically reductionist (Mudimbe, 1988). According to Owakah (2002), since the course of African philosophy is determined by its response to such reductionist discourses, it enables Africa to speak its aspects and mind. Accordingly, the

thesis needs to show that universalizing Western local values is the thesis of Western philosophy while the response of African philosophy is the antithesis. In view of this, the thesis suggested an intercultural approach<sup>iv</sup> that African philosophy contributes to the possible dialogue between the West and Africa. Besides, the notions of particularism and universalism are not seen separately, but one can be understood based on the other. The foundation for this is that there are humanistic and ethically interesting principles in traditional values that both the West and Africa should consider. By this, the thesis explains that intercultural approach is the key to understanding the ideas of humanity, morality, human togetherness, freedom, equality, identity and the role of traditional principles that African philosophy pronounces. This is a possible way to assume a balance between the contributions of traditional values of Africa and Western science in the long walk to make Africa an equal player in globalization and keep up African identity.

To sum up, African philosophy comprehensively aims at two trajectories in its attempt of challenging Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization. Firstly, how does African philosophy react to the false Universalism that underlies globalization itself? In other words, what can African philosophy contribute to the recognition of cultural alternatives in the formation of an enabling multilateral conversation of traditions and cultures? Secondly, how does African philosophy enable us in getting back to an African identity and the calibration of African development in the face of the global economy, culture, ideology and economic hindrances?

In answering these trajectories, under chapter one, the break and continuity of Western hegemony in Africa will be thoroughly discussed. Hereunder, the implication of Western philosophy of the hierarchy of human races is evaluated. The purpose is to unravel Western domination on African mentality, culture, and the economy. Based on this, the claim herein is, globalization only reflects and pronounces Western values in Africa without giving due respect to

African traditional values. Accordingly, the effort of the West to westernize Africa with the true universal values<sup>v</sup> is pseudo-universalization because the effort does not consider the values of Africans that the rest of the world shares.

In chapter two, I discuss the nature and meaning of African philosophy in a globalized world. African philosophy considers humanity with commonly shared values such as justice, freedom, and equality in order to make African values an equal partner with Western values. Stating the thesis and antithesis of Western and African philosophy respectively, the enthusiasm of African philosophy towards an intercultural approach is discussed. With regard to this, the claim is that the pluralistic nature of cultures is a strike to the possibility of such approach.

In Chapter three, the commitment of African philosophy in getting back to an African identity is discussed by responding to the impacts of globalization. Most importantly, the chapter unearths the contribution of African philosophy and its practitioners in response to Westernization, i.e. false Universalism, colonial discourses and the impacts of globalization, so as to keep up African identity.

Finally, in Chapter four concluding remarks on the contribution of African philosophy in questioning Western hegemony via globalization is discussed. And how Africa aligns its values with science and technology of the West particularly, how “Africa will have to rely upon Africa” will be suggested. Moreover, how the African people, leaders, philosophers and other concerned bodies should realize the African Renaissance<sup>vi</sup> with the sense of Africanization will be suggested.

## Chapter One

### 1. The Break and Continuity of Western Hegemony in Africa

Assume Europe *per se* and the West alone in the world order where there is no Africa enriched with natural resources. Assume also Africa *per se* where political practices, economic activities, an intellect of its descents, cultural and religious aspects are not influenced externally. Besides, bear in mind the world order where there is no political, economic or cultural integration among states in particular and continents in general. It would be impossible for a state to be self-reliant since no state is an island. The same is true for continents of Europe and Africa, especially for the rise of Europe above Africa, although Europe denounces fruits it bears from the continent (Diop, 1991; James, 1954; Rodney, 1973). Philosophers thought that human beings are entitled to free will and power to exploit nature and utilize resources around them. The excessive use of this free will and power causes the emergence of the West, and ambitions to dominate the entire world with the so called “superior” culture, philosophy and science (Ukpabi, 1970). Besides this, the integration of independent states continentally emerged for common *telos* such as cultural, political, military and economic imperialism to dominate the rest of “Others” (ibid).

Universalization of European values via extension is the ultimate goal of the West fueled by some of the racist Western philosophers to dominate the entire world. Apparently, this becomes worrisome to the Third World countries, for their traditional values are found to be supplanted by Western ones. The slave trade and colonial history of Africa give evidence to this. My approach herein is to discuss by looking more closely at the break and continuity of Western hegemony in Africa since the European encounter with Africa. The domination of the West precludes Africa to take part in its share since the West attempts to achieve its ambition of universalizing European values (Makinda and Okumu, 2008). Such ambition caused Westernization as a serious challenge in Africa, which traces back to the proposal of the “civilizing mission” and colonialism. For this

reason, some writers criticize colonization as if it bears nothing worthy of the continent rather than colonizing the African culture, economy and mind (Settles, 1996; Rodney, 1973; Messay, 2004; Ukpabi, 1970; Arowolo, 2010; Cesaire, 1972; Fanon, 1967).

However, colonialism awakens Africans to question colonialism and search for the original identity that they had before the encounter. In so doing, colonialism built the consciousness of Africanness<sup>vii</sup> (Makinda and Okumu, 2008). They contend that the Africans' search for their identity is rooted in their understanding of basic notions of "African personality", "negritude", and "African Renaissance" by scrutinizing Western negative portrayal of the continent (ibid). In this regard, African philosophy articulates and questions past injustices that the West imposed on Africa via colonialism. I think, it helps the present generation to resist the injustices of Westernization and globalization because African philosophy "is meant to facilitate the organizing of past, present, and future philosophical articulations and practices by and in the interests of African-descended peoples" (Outlaw, 2004, p. 90).

Beyond colonialism, Africa, hitherto remains in the mind of Western states amid the commencement of the claim on "universal" philosophy and the theory of realism. The claim empowered the West to establish influential power on the world economy and political ideology. This disables Africa to take part in the contemporary global issues that affect it and sort out its problems and resolve them in an African way. The reason is because the West remain dominant actor of globalization. What is the goal behind for the West to remain as the dominant actor of globalization? The domination is rooted in the ambition of universalizing Western values. Some of the racist Western philosophers inspired the West to extend its prestige and values to the rest of the world. The philosophy of human races is the discourse that helps the West to export its local values to the continent of Africa in particular and the world in general.

## 1.1 Hierarchy of Human Race in Western Philosophy and Its Implication

Christianity, the religion that the West enunciates, preaches “God created human beings in His own image.” Other religions have no different doctrine on this which implies such a being is equal regardless of biological differences. Correspondingly, Western philosophy characterizes human beings as rational beings and Aristotle was a proponent of it. But if Aristotle were correct, the human race would not be put into a category of “superior” or “inferior”, “black” or “white”, endowed with “reason” or “emotion”. On the contrary, according to Aristotle, non-Greeks are less humans because they are not rational as the Greeks are (quoted in Velasquez, 2009, p. 56). Aristotle became the mastermind of racism whose philosophy brought racist philosophers such as G.W.F. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, and David Hume. Hegel’s remark on the history of the world is a point of departure of the denial of Africa as if the continent is static, extravagant, and away from proper history and philosophy. Of course, this would not be subject of Western philosophy if the authors consider the virtue of humanity to which African philosophy stands and acknowledges Africans’ contributions to world philosophy and civilization (Diop, 1991 and James, 1954).

Following Hegel’s trivialization of Africa, the “civilizing mission” is proposed to reshape Africa’s natural existence into Western made continent. Mudimbe, (1988); Abegunrin, (2009); Bongmba, (2001) and Keim, (2009) contend that the current Africa is the creation of Europeans. According to Kiros (2004), Africa was enslaved by the whites because they are in need of blacks’ body and their ways of doing things. The portrayal of Africa by racist philosophers suggests the “civilizing mission” project, which helps the “civilizers” to export Western values to Africa. The export continues in the contemporary age of globalization aiming at Westernizing Africa. The justification of Western cultural, epistemological, and economic hegemony in Africa is thus complacent to the philosophy of the hierarchy of the human race. It is also the realization of

inequality among nations which causes injustice that jeopardizes Africans' search for social justice, freedom, equality, humanity and their identity.

The contemporary unjust domination of the West in the global system threatens African traditional values in particular and the global humanity in general. As a result, African ways of handling its problems rest in the hands of the West that subdue the contribution of African philosophy to African progress. But do benefits of globalization underlie the true universal values while the West insists on universalizing its local values? The Western motto of Universalism does not really aim at universalizing the true universal values that the global humanity shares. Rather, it aims at universalizing westernization at the cost of traditional values of "Others".

The West articulates various forms of paradigms such as dependency, modernization, and neoliberalism, to extend its prestige in order to replace traditional values and principles of Africa. These paradigms are not different from the "civilizing mission", for they are exclusive of African ways. They are also tools the West is empowered with to disentangle African black body from its spirit so that Africans abandon theirs and look for Western science and technology. Science and technology, on the other hand, are wings of the West to "organize" and "arrange" Africa's sociocultural and economic conditions. It is obvious that science and technology help Africa to rise up, and the contemporary claim of its Renaissance depends on them. Nonetheless, the West claims the "true", "universal" and its local phenomena of science and technology based on its philosophy. The question is, does African Renaissance require such science and Western values that disrespect African traditional values? Mudimbe wrote, "... the policies of domesticating natives; and the manner of managing ancient organizations and implementing new modes of production are the main factors of the colonial structure" (1988, p. 15).

The same factors go to the Westernizing project that changes the features of Africa. The claim here is, the Western approach of universalizing human values is local and false because the West is striving to westernize the entire world. The claim of superiority over the mental, cultural and economic aspects of Africa, implies the Western attempt of Universalism is false and so local. With regard to the African mind, for instance, Messay states that “African beliefs are scrutinized according to scientific criteria and declared unfit and savage, while those of the West are allowed to soar treatment” (2004, p. 31). This “is the denigration of the African mind” according to him (ibid). Western export of alien cultures in the name of “civilizing mission” and democratization to the continent does not only undermine African mentality but also traditional values of Africa. As a result, everything today in Africa is named and explained through “Eurocentric languages” such as democracy, human rights, and science. Such “Eurocentric languages”, “were superimposed upon African cultures without an informed or dedicated commitment to preserving the integrity of African conceptual idioms” (Brown, 2004, p. 4). Western ambition to universalize the notions of capitalism and liberalism is still the effort of the West to continue dominating the continent, and empower its economic hegemony. This is a long journey to accumulate Wealth based on competition in a free market economy, which also put Africa at risk. This will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

So, the African development outcomes mentally, culturally and economically are affected, since the West launches its local mental and cultural hegemony. Western domination via everything bans African viewpoints and traditional principles to be heard and practiced as was banned by colonialism. However, African metaphysical thought embraces and deals with globalization realities in Africa and attempts to respond to its impacts based on the roots it is embedded. But the metaphysical thought is dominated by Western education of science and

technology that do not respect African traditional values. Even most Africans do not attempt to search for valuable traditions because “who go through modern education are highly infatuated with the so-called Western and modern way of life” (Bekele, 2002, p. 211).

Western instruction of science and technology to Africa, I think, is “abandonment” of African ways. That is why the West enlightens globalization with modern science and art to dominate the global system wherein Africa surrenders its values. Western homogenization<sup>viii</sup> of global culture, in another sense, threatens African physical and spiritual conception of humanism. African experiences conceive such threats as globalization realities that cannot be denied. Since Western ideas and solutions are accepted as “superior” and “absolute”, it seems to develop African traditional values, science and technology is difficult. So, African traditions are not best situated in African social-cultural and academic institutions because they are replaced by Western science and technology. The reason, according to Brown, is “modern technology has produced artificially intelligent systems that proclaim ‘epistemological violence’ against Africa” (2004, p. 164).

## **1.2 The Impact of Western Hegemony in Africa**

Scholars have a firm belief that globalization makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, and as a result, the West continues the project of westernizing Africa with its culture and values. In this regard, the African system of reflecting, analyzing, and criticizing world realities is dominated in Africa, and this disables Africa to resolve its problems. Globalization does not demarcate Westernization rather than recognizing its triumph in an African place. To put another way, the impacts of globalization increase in Africa because globalization enunciate the idea of aid and technical support, which still divides sovereign states into donors and recipients. This ensures the West to be the forerunner of the West-Africa relations because “Europe is pushing for an agenda without allowing for a natural progression in African societies” (Aggad-Clex, 2014). This kind of

relations increases Africa's marginalization in today's global system because "the colonialists [the hegemonic states] have [attempted] to organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 14).

The entire relationship of Africa and the West has not brought expected changes to the continent because the West favors its own benefits to sustain its influential power in the system. Accordingly, African social system, cultural practices, systems of thought and production are being replaced following the inexorable wave of globalization with technological advancement. The claim "great support enhances greater success" makes Africa expectant of Western solutions. The Western policy of capitalism and Neoliberalism that embraces science and technology via globalization, as a result, hinders African systems of thought to be reflected in the system, and in matters that affect the lives of its people. Globalization, thus, is the system in which Western hegemony assumes transplantation of African traditional values and diverting an African mind into the Western spirit.

The exploitative nature of capitalism (Murray, 1953) seems to me the key to understanding the impacts of the Western uninterrupted hegemony in African system of thought and production. The robbery of African treasures, restructuring of socio-cultural aspects and canonizing Africans with Western values were features of slavery and colonialism. Western hegemony in today's era of globalization continues such wrong deeds by changing their features. In addition to this, the imperialist Western states do not respect the humanity of Africans besides denying their traditional values. With regard to African systems of thought and management of their resources, capitalist states claim Africans are unskilled (Keim, 2009). The presence of technology extends the opportunity for the West to exploit Africa while it prevents Africa from sorting out its problems

with African solutions. Globalization, that pronounces science and technology, causes global imperialism by which the West continues to be the dominant player in the system worrying Africa.

According to Thiong'o (1987), "imperialism continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa" (p. 4). In global imperialism, Africa will no longer remain free from this hegemony and continues to be a marginal player of globalization. Nonetheless, the Africans' struggle to emancipate the continent from such hegemony seems inevitable in their walks of lives. For revolution is a must and chaos follows in capitalist states, Africans' search for emancipation via their philosophy is inevitable. Okrah (2003) states, "For the African philosopher, philosophy can never consist of reducing the African reality to Western systems" (p. 15). Westernizing Africa is the Neocolonialism paradigm afflicting African reality that African philosophy need to challenge.

The long-term foreign policy is the instrument the West uses to extend its prestige and achieve the goal of westernizing Africa. Many of the African states still keep their relations with their former colonizers. Globalization forces these states to remain integrated with Western colonizers without letting them benefit equally. With regard to this, Wright argues, "it is evident that many problems are afflicting the continent and that their continuance could see Africa completely and perhaps permanently marginalized from the global political economy and society" (1999, p. 19). The foreign policy, thus keeps the interest of the West at the cost of national interest of African descents, and "primarily addresses the interests of the economically dominant North, i.e. Europe and America" (Bekele, 2007, p. 107).

The international community seems to defend Africa from such incursion. But the community has given supreme power to Western permanent members of the United Nations (UN) to make decisions on matters that affect Africa. This makes Africa a pseudo-participant of the community

waiting for Western solutions, and exposed the continent to adopt “Eurocentric languages.” It is not without reason that African leaders always demand equal participation in the Security Council of the UN. In view of the idea of justice to claim the UN does not permit reason to rule over the inappropriate desires of the West is not exaggerating. An everlasting dominant involvement of the West in global matters such as human rights, “global economic reform”, “modernization” and “democratization” also manifests the continued marginalization of Africa in globalization. Yet, globalization has benefited Africa. According to Mittelman,

The contradictory nature of globalization offers major benefits, including gains in productivity, technological advances, higher standards of living, more jobs, broader access to consumer products at lower cost, widespread dissemination of information and knowledge, reductions in poverty in some parts of the world, and a release from longstanding social hierarchies in many countries. (Mittelman, 2000, p. 5)

### **1.2.1 Slave Trade and its Impacts on the Development of Africa**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) declares the equality of global citizens regardless of biological differences. Certain declarations and conventions of the UN also state that no one shall be the slave of others, for everybody is free by the virtue of humanity. It is this notion that governs the international relations system since slave trade is abolished. However, history depicts the international relation of the West and Africa is not seen separately from the policy of slavery, colonialism and globalization. Slavery deprived the dignity and psychology of African descents because it devastated the African mind, culture, and economy. At best this, I think, manifest the moral failure of the West because it considered Africans as market commodities to be bought and sold believing that they are “inferior” human race. On the devastating effect of slavery in African development, Rodney argues “African economic activity was affected both directly and indirectly by population loss” (1973, p. 148). Slavery thus dismantled African personality from land and alienation occurred on the continent of Africa.

The exploitation of the Africans via slavery justifies that the West underdeveloped Africa and eroded African traditional values, culture, sense of humanity and communalism. Slavery, as a result, dispossessed an African from the treasures of his own, the product of his labor, and also the alienation of himself. The people of Africa, both in the continent and the diaspora, are also “dismembered” and colonialism caused the “division of the African from his land, body, and mind” (Thiong’o, 2009, p. 6). Besides, Thiong’o argues:

The land is taken away from its owner, and the owner is turned into a worker on the same land, thus losing control of his natural and human resources. The colonial subject has no say over the colonial state; in effect, he produces but has no say over the disposal of the product. Yet the state has power over every aspect of his being. Whereas before he was his own subject, now he is subject to another. (ibid)

Although the slave trade was denounced as an outmoded waste of African human resources, it seems to continue today through migration because globalization provides a global village wherein everything moves freely. Cross-boundary migration of the African people nowadays is another enslavement of Africa. So, Africans are dispossessed because there is no “global WE” and “Globalization is... a social process in which the grotesque failures and social evils of the modern world cannot be easily painted over” (Lemert, 2005, p. 155).

### **1.2.2 African Mentality in the Eye of the West**

Some of the racist Western philosophers and the “logic of evolutionism” dispatch the irrationality of African mentality. So far, the Africans were portrayed as incapable of being creative in language, religion, art, science, and technology compared to Western human races. Kant, Hume, and Hegel typify Africans as mentally ill-equipped and “savages” because they “have minds more like those of children than of adults” (Messay, 2004, p. 2). Consequently, the Africans are required to admit “a widespread modern notion of science as a discovery of universal truths” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 245). The humiliation of African mind is rooted in the philosophy of the hierarchy of the

human race as stated previously. The “black” and ‘white” division, according to Bongmba, depicts “Africans as inferior and incapable of any good taste, because what is good in Africa must have come from outside Africa” (2001, p. 58). Globalization, as a result, is the system in which the West freely exports its local values into Africa, and African states are imitating the West so as to rise up the continent.

The equality of all human races with their identities was among the expectations since globalization was perceived as an interdependence of states and the free flow of technologies. Nevertheless, the Western negative image of Africa from narrations and the media is not eliminated. Unfortunately, the Western racial explanation of African mind has not rational ground. For instance, Kant’s conclusion that “black is bad, evil, inferior” (quoted in Eze, 1997, p. 117), is an appeal to emotion. Hegel’s and others’ assertions on the inferiority of the black from the white are not also rationally justified rather than reflecting a racial discrimination. However, globalization realities, particularly westernizing Africa show the persistence of the negative portrayal of African mentality. In this case, globalization fails to delimit the intervention of the West on matters that affect the sovereign states of Africa.

Accordingly, the contemporary issues of the continent (civil war, terrorism, epidemic diseases such as EBOLA and HIV/AIDS, climate change, human rights, to mention some) are still calling for Western intervention. Western mind cultivates its science and technology to alleviate such issue, for indigenous knowledge is disrespected. In addition to this, an unjust comparison between African indigenous knowledge with Western science and art implies underestimation of African mentality. The issue herein is not to praise extremely the indigenous knowledge of Africa, but how to get rid of the Western humiliation of African mentality. On the other hand, the contribution of science and technology for African Renaissance is not negotiable. In fact, African Renaissance

demands science and technology to rectify its problems, and the African mentality positively admits this. In so doing, an African is aware of the impacts that science and technology result in transgressing one's identity. However, the African mind is hitherto colonized. Globalization, instead, inspires Africans to be enlightened with the Western motto of science and technology. Consequently, Westernization deprives the spirit of Africans and distorts their spirit into Western one.

Western education is another tool designed to alienate Africans from their spirit. It embraces the achievements of Western science and technology aiming at transplanting traditional values of Africa. It is an imposition that enslaves African mentality which closes their mind not to think about their ways. Western education never dictates the achievements of African traditional values, for there is a belief that they are associated with superstition. This education, on the other hand, motivates literate Africans to flee to the West abandoning their homeland through scholarship. Importing Africans via scholarship and deporting them to their homeland is thus technical means of exporting Western master mentality to Africa.

Western education, which goes through Western philosophy, indoctrinated the African race with the assumption of their inferiority compared to the West. Following this, there is a belief that "white men know how to do a great many things of which black men are ignorant, they, therefore, know what is best for black men and are entitled to lay down what they ought to do and how they ought to live" (Roberts, 1990, p. 61). For globalization is inspiring Western education, the African philosophy of education of indigenous knowledge and traditional principles is not welcomed. In that, much of African mentality is separated from its base, i.e. African culture.

### **1.3 The Ontology of Globalization in an African Place: Westernization**

The colonial physical threat of Africa is now over in an African place. But the ceaseless threat and the hegemony of the West hitherto continues through globalization. According to Mittelman, “globalization is not a single, unified phenomenon, but a syndrome of processes and activities” (2000, p. 4). It embraces the domain of knowledge, new technologies, import and export, democratization, and the like are being exported to Africa. However, “it is essentially a reality born from the opening up of hitherto inaccessible realms of the world to an influx of Occidental values” (Situma, 2002, p. 101). The influx is the bedrock of Western domination in Africa via globalization so as to achieve the ambition to universalize local values in the name of universalizing the true universal values. According to Situma, values such as rationality, democracy, and freedom are universal, but plays into the hands of the dominant other (ibid). The central question in this part is, who are champions of globalization to universalize the true universal values that the world shares? Does globalization entertain Western science and traditional values of Africa equally? Does the West respect traditional values and indigenous socio-cultural practices of Africa when it exports its values to Africa? Is humanity the sole purpose of globalization that considers the thought of the non-Western world?

#### **1.3.1 African Cultures and the Western Acculturation**

A society void of culture is nonexistent. Culture is the way of life of peoples of a given society. Every society has a culture of exercising its practices by which it manifests its ways of living and speaks its identity and values. “Africans from various regions of the continent have a long history of expressive culture, through the oral traditions, music, literature, and art that permeate every aspect of daily life” (Falola and Sanchez, 2014, p. 2). This culture embraces all forms of lives of Africans such as philosophy, mode of production, history, psychological makeup, medical

practices (midwifery, traditional medicine or herbals), miracle practitioners (rainmakers), and self-governance. In addition, it involves moral, ethical, and religious standards that guide Africans' daily practices.

The ethical and moral standards of Africans are rooted in African cultures. Africa had its own cultural practices and thought before Europe encountered the continent. However, Western philosophy lumped them as primitive. As a result, "Africa's indigenous cultures were, in both principles and fact, disqualified from occupying a place in philosophical arena" (Hallen, 2000, p. 1). The only reason for this is because the West claims the superiority of its culture and attempts to universalize it. Thus, "western imperialism in Africa was not only meant physical threat, but also the export of cultures to replace African cultures" (Owakah, 2002, p. 122).

In the same account, Brown said, "A fundamental tenet of modern Western culture is that science is the primary arbiter of what is real and that which cannot be confirmed or otherwise supported by science is a metaphysical fantasy or mere superstition" (2014, p. 159). Colonialism and Neocolonialism of Africa via the "civilizing mission" are ways of exporting Western culture to universalize it. In this respect, some claim that colonization produces civilization in Africa, yet it lets Africans off the track of their indigenous values because "Neocolonialism is a powerful gag to stifle peoples culturally so as to continue colonial relations indefinitely" (Braganca and Wallerstein, 1982, p. 142). Globalization forces Africa to import alien cultures as colonialism did in the name of civilization and Westernization. That is why Césaire states, "between colonization and civilization there is an infinite distance" (1972, p. 34).

Westernization, the contemporary Western way to "civilize" Africa, is seen as Neocolonialism that the West launches to prolong its domination in the continent. This aims to canonize the African people with the doctrine of Western civilization via science and technology, which is the goal of

Westernization. Rousseau's belief that civilization is systematically corrupting (quoted in Stephen, 2004) is justifiable to the traditions, values and thought of the people of Africa. For Western civilization embraces the revolution of science and art, civilization can be seen as a means of human corruption when it commences going against cultures of Africa. In this regard, the African traditional culture was the primary thing either to be transformed or transplanted. Westernization via globalization is recolonization of Africa in that it aims at transplanting all African cultures and replacing them with the West one. Arowolo (2010), observes the situation and describes in his way as: "Western civilization and culture began to creep into African socio-cultural milieu... and, later, consolidated by the unstoppable wave of globalization" (p.2).

Workineh also points out that "globalization has been undermining nation states in the world" by which "nation states are deprived of their cultural and often political sovereignty" (2009, p. 5). Ramose also argues that, "globalization has significantly weakened the sovereign's right to exercise decisive control over economic activity within its own borders" (2003, p. 741). However, it is believed that religion and culture are the sole sources of binding values of human action (Igboin, 2011). Besides, there are some universally shared values in diversified cultures, although globalization fails to value such diversity. Globalization, according to Igboin is "a concept associated with unipolar tendencies, aggressive towards economic puissance, and imperialistic in disguise – is the latest in the drives towards unifying the world. Its values theoretically align with positive values, but practically deny it" (2011, p. 97)

Besides unipolar tendencies, one of the intentions of globalization, according to Ramose, is identified as homogenization (2003). Regardless of this, culture emerges and grows with its features because of its unceasing nature (Falola and Sanchez, 2014). Bekele (2004) on this contends that culture changes and adapts itself to the changed situations because it is mutually

influenced by another. But the culture of science and technology becomes the issue of globalization to westernize the global order which highly affects African traditional values. This is pseudo-universalization of the commonly shared values among human races. The reason for this is that Western thought tends towards the position that “there can only be one set of fundamental values; others can be justified to the extent that they are derivative from these” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 248).

Nevertheless, the contemporary international relations system, enlightened by globalization, is calling attention to human rights depicted on the UDHR. I think, these human rights encompass African cultural traditions that clearly describe the African identity. So, they are common values of different cultures and religions that determine the rightness and wrongness of human actions. However, the universalist thought, according to Calhoun (1992), helps the West to be the dominant player of globalization, and extend its hegemony in the system so as to westernize the non-Western hemisphere.

Internationalization of trading system is the other means the West uses to export its cultures into Africa. The West adapts and imposes liberalism and capitalism through it. Liberalism and capitalism are alien ideologies which are always antithetical to African culture of communal life, traditional practices, and religion. Inquiring the impacts of these ideologies on African culture, Mittelman states that “... the penetration of world markets and increased polarization on a world level erode cultural traditions, giving rise to new hybrid forms” (2000, p. 5). Consequently, globalization of liberalism and capitalism, I think, is challenging diversified cultures of the world in general and of Africa in particular. In other words, “globalization is a motor that exports Western ideologies such as liberal democracy, capitalism to Africa, and other parts of the world” (Chimakonam, 2014, p. 137). Important African cultural practices and thought are getting down because Western science and technology are highly spread and accepted in Africa. The impacts of

globalization push Africa to import and handle Western ideologies rather than using its traditional values. To put the point another way, Western domination does not let Africa cope with globalization and use its tradition to reduce the impacts of globalization.

In this situation, the super actors of international relations are shaping and affecting every aspect of Africans via globalization. It is clear that globalization enforces all of us in the system to abandon what is ours, and follow even put into practice what belongs to the West. In the experience I come across; the food we cook and eat, the drink we prepare, traditional industries we work in and the products we produce are being desperately affected by Western culture. The pornographic movies, sport shows (English premier league), political agendas (election campaigning in the US between Republicans and Democrats) of the West on CNN, daily updates of news via the internet (Facebook and Twitter) draw our attention in that we neglect ours. This, I think, indicates a Western relentless effort to create a Westernized Africa wherein traditional values have no place. It is in this attempt that the West faces resentment from Islamic Africa, i.e. Boko Haram<sup>ix</sup> in resisting Western education.

Accordingly, the impetus that globalization exerted on Africa converts the sociocultural lives and systems into the Western mode. The colonializing project spreads new attitudes through churches, schools, press and media which contravene the original values of the continent (Mudimbe, 1988). These new attitudes were “richly complex models in terms of culture, spiritual values, and their transmission, it also broke the culturally unified and religiously integrated schema of most African traditions” (ibid, p. 27). In this regard, globalization, I think, is recolonization, in which Western values and practices are being diffused via international media, aid, foreign relations and so on in the name of “civilizing mission”. Civilizing Africa through Western science and technology replaced the African social, cultural, economic and religious values. As a result,

“original African cultures do not exist anymore in our times because their diverse aspects have been ended by the pace of industrialization” (Chukwu, 2002, p. 250). “Science and technology,” Chukwu believes, “are the basis of industrialization, which constitutes an indispensable educational foundation in African nations” (ibid).

The foregoing assertions infer that the Westernizing project in Africa challenges diversified values and their contributions in accommodating differences. Calhoun argues, “Cultural difference among human societies and differences among people within societies or communicative communities is in itself desirable” (1992, p. 248). On the contrary, the so-called “superior culture” devalues the claim “different flowers blossom” regarding the values of differences. Cultural values such as open-mindedness to deal with commonly shared values are also undermined by the mission because universalization of Western “superior” culture rejects dialogue and polylogue. Due to this, the West disables Africa not to speak its mind, reflect its system of thought and sort out its solutions for its problems. This, in turn, does not offer the opportunity for Africa to be heard and understood in international meetings, such as in the UN.

### **1.3.2 Africa and World Market Competition in the Era of Globalization**

It was thought by Nkrumah, Senghor, and Nyerere that “capitalism was incompatible with African culture and that the colonial heritage was equated with capitalism” (cited in Bell, 2002, p. 36). In the economic fate of Africa in the world market competition, it seems Nkrumah predicts the imposition of Western declarations on African economies. Nkrumah wrote, “Neocolonialism is through which state’s economic system and political policy are directed from outside” (1965, p. ix). He exposes the colonial infringement that “exploits the physical, human, and economic resources of an area to benefit the colonizing nation” (Settles, 1996, p.3). Today’s globalization is

not exceptional just in case capitalism and liberalism “used for the greater development of overseas interests” (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 2).

Globalization, according to Cole (2008), builds a room for global competition in which material wealth is highly constrained to put up the reasonable contest on the world market. Ramose argues that “competition’, ‘competitiveness’ is the dogma of economic globalization” (2003, p. 750). This causes “an asymmetrical and unequal relationship between Africa and the [West]” (Kasongo, 2010, p. 123). As a result, common values of diversified cultures such as justice, freedom, equality, and humanity are being threatened in the system. Mittelman in relation to this claims that Africa’s “national options are severely constrained by the forces of globalization” (2000, p. 241). It is a system wherein the West enjoys wealth accumulation that marginalizes Africa. The system sets wealth as a sole measure of human dignity, which affects Africans’ socioeconomic and religious lives. According to Mittelman, to demarginalize this constraint of globalization on the national interest of African states is challenging (ibid).

So, what does African philosophy contribute to ensuring the national interest of the African people? How does African philosophy enable the African people to defend freedom, justice, and equality in the continent so as to take part in their shares in the globalization system? African philosophy is the tool that equips African people to defend their national interests, preserve their traditional values, keep their identity and cope with the achievements of globalization.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2. The Meaning and Nature of African Philosophy in a Globalized World**

A debate on the meaning and nature of philosophy indicates the controversial nature and meaning of African philosophy. While some conceive philosophy in a more critical sense, others conceive it in the literal sense. Considering the former as a basic criterion of philosophy African philosophy is assumed to be not philosophical. Thus, as there is no a universally agreed upon conception of philosophy, there is no a single conception of African philosophy. Nonetheless, why are the meaning, nature, even the existence of African philosophy controversial issues while philosophy is a universal discipline? According to Birt, this is partly due to the fact that “the authors’ views on this are largely what determine their answer to the question of African philosophy” (1991, p. 95).

#### **2.1 The Nature of African Philosophy**

With regard to the nature of African philosophy, different philosophers understood and used it in different ways (Chimakonam, 2014). The universality claim of Western philosophy and the denial of Africans’ mentality led the foundation to the controversial and debatable nature of African philosophy. My attempt, then, is not to discuss why it is controversial, but to unearth the indispensable nature and meaning of African philosophy in a globalized world. In so doing, I contend the nature of African philosophy in a globalized world can be understood in line with both particularists’ and universalists’ conception of philosophy.

While particularists’ remark on African philosophy implies the existence of a philosophy that belongs to Africa, universalists’ argument about the universal meaning of philosophy implies the real nature of African philosophy as a philosophy. Discussing the African notions of culture, traditional values, ubuntu<sup>x</sup>, the virtue of humanity, ethics, and commonly shared values is essential to show such nature of African philosophy. The underlying reason is “cultural difference cannot

be an outdated preoccupation which needs to be pushed aside in favor of a more ‘universal’ or ‘innocent’ field of communication” (Kanneh, 1998, p. 10). This is to mean that as culture is not the property that a single human race owns, important values are not also properties of a single human race.

### **2.1.1 African Philosophy and Culture**

To start with, I presume philosophy does not exist outside of this world because there is no society apart from it in that its tool, i.e. reason, is rooted in culture (Eze, 2008 and Blocker, 1999). Kanu (2014) contends “every culture makes a contribution from its house of experience to the universal themes of philosophy, and this makes philosophy relevant to the reality of life” (p. 93). Kanu goes on to say that “each culture traces the unity of these themes, synthesizes and organizes them into a totality, based on each culture’s concept of life, namely, the relationships between objects and persons and between persons and person” (ibid). If this is true, is it sound to claim that Western philosophy, science and culture are universal?

As I have discussed in chapter one, Western ambition to universalize its local culture, science, and philosophy is a challenge that African philosophy needs to unravel. Philosophy as a universal discipline is not the property of the West or Africa. Based on this, African philosophy needs to recognize that cultures of all nations have some stamp of philosophy and shared values to articulate global problems. Henry. O. Oruka states that “philosophy is a rational and critical reflection on man, society, and nature” (quoted in Graness and Kresse, 1997, p. 28). Egbunu echoes this idea by claiming “philosophy is culture-relative in diverse ways” (2013, p. 142). So, according to Obenga, “there is no single philosophy that could be excogitated except in relation to life, society, existence, and universe” (2004, p. 33). African philosophy, which recognizes the pluralistic nature of culture, with the embedded reason in them, refers to

the features in philosophy that give it its peculiar African character. This is found in the African philosophical tradition; for philosophy is rooted in a tradition. The nature of a philosophy is the tradition of that philosophy and the tradition of a philosophy is the spirit and style of that philosophy, the persistent and dominant orientation of a people's philosophy, which can be seen as primary. The nature of African philosophical tradition is in its innermost essence which is rooted in and nourished within the context of African culture, history, and experience and this is more metaphysical and spiritual. (Ekanem, 2012, p. 55-56)

The foregoing passage about the nature of African philosophy points that “there could not come to a single human value” (Cesaire, 1972, p. 34) from a single local culture, i.e. from the West. Yet, since the West assumed the “superiority” of its philosophy and culture, the culture and philosophy of Africa were dominated. That is why most African philosophers aspire for African philosophy of mental, cultural, religious, and economic decolonization (Messay, 2004 and Wiredu, 1998). Messay, for instance, suggests “a pluralistic view of history” to ban the ranking of cultures (2004, p. 21). Similarly, Teffo and Roux, assume “pluralistic approach to cultures and framework” in order to consider the values of each culture (2003, p. 193).

My approach thus is to argue that an intercultural and philosophical approach is needed between the dominant and the marginalized. What does then African philosophy in its nature demand for both Africa and the rest of others in a globalizing world? What does African philosophy suggest to challenge Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization in Africa and in the global system? What does such challenge imply to the rest of the marginalized southern hemisphere?

There are philosophers, both African and non-African who contend that Africa is the land of origins of world civilization, worldview, and human beings (Diop, 1991; James, 1954). Nevertheless, according to Taiwo, “it is the land that time forgot, a veritable museum where there are to be found the relics of the race, the human race” (1998, p. 2). Some Western philosophies characterized African cultures as backward and concluded the absence of African philosophy, although Africa, hitherto is in need of being discovered, spoken and understood (Hallen, 2002).

The racist philosophers appeal to emotion to deny African philosophy and history based on the information disseminated by the explorers. The fact is that the continent has its own philosophy which is rooted in its culture and tradition in different ways (Ekanem, 2012; Hallen, 2002; Messay, 2004; Wiredu, 1998; Chimakonam, 2014 and Okrah, 2003). Since philosophy is stamped in culture, it is a universal discipline which mainly aims at searching to understand life (Graness and Kresse, 1997; Ekanem, 2012 and Obenga, 2004). The life to be understood is any kind of human experience in a given culture. I think the same account goes to African philosophy, for it is always exploring the African lives. Therefore, “it is admittedly difficult and dangerous to try to separate African philosophy from culture” (Owakah, 2002, p. viii).

### **2.1.2 African Philosophy and the Sense of Humanity**

The foregoing remarks on philosophy suggest that the meaning and nature of philosophy is all about the pursuit of wisdom because human beings by nature wonder and explore to know. Nevertheless, “the self-appointed heirs to the right to reason have thus established themselves as the producers of all knowledge and the only holders of the truth” (Ramose, 2003, p. 2). African philosophy, in case, is the discourse of deconstructing such claim, and “it targets and points to the human person as a rational entity” (Kanu, 2012, p. 53). Accordingly, the idea of humanity is not severely understood from reason, which is a key to philosophizing. So, reason is a common human character that nature offers to us by the virtue of humanity. If this assumption is correct, it is not exaggerating to characterize racist Western philosophers as irrational who deny philosophy and history in Africa.

So, what does African philosophy contribute to making globalization a just system wherein humanity and its important parts such as freedom, equality, and human togetherness are respected and protected? African philosophy articulates the idea of social justice in the contemporary global system. So long as African philosophy inquires social justice as one of the commonly shared

values, humanity is its central notion. The Africans' conception of humanism in this regard needs "a philosophy that sees human needs, interests, and dignity as of fundamental importance and concern" (Bell, 2002, p. 39). African philosophy is in search for a positive relationship among global citizens by critically and systematically analyzing ways of relationship. The search for social justice justifies this. In so doing, it exposes the moral failure of Western philosophy, for it prioritizes its race, culture, and philosophy. Ramose on this said that "the injustice [i.e. the subjugation] is apparent in the recognition that there is neither a moral basis nor pedagogical justification for the Western epistemological paradigm to retain primacy and dominance in decolonized Africa" (2003, p. 4). The idea of African humanity via social justice and positive relationship helps to decolonize Western hegemonic epistemological paradigm. The notion also embraces ethical justification that endorses the golden rule of global ethics<sup>xi</sup>. African philosophy, therefore, speaks "out of ... its own rich heritage of humanistic dignity" (Bell, 2002, p. 48).

For Africa is the mother of all human races, its philosophy seeks to draw attention to global humanity because we are humans to the humanity of others. African philosophy "is homocentric, in the sense that it is man-centered<sup>xii</sup>" (Balogun, 2014, p. 58). This intends to clarify the important ideas of African values, beliefs, and systems of thought, which make up African humanity. In this respect, African philosophy is essential to discuss the Western idea of individualism, which excommunicates the African idea of communalism<sup>xiii</sup>. In a globalized world, wherein liberalism and capitalism are challenging human togetherness, African philosophy applauds that the essence of individualism and communalism is inseparable. Being human describes "being-with-others" and "It is shortly grasped, according to Mbiti, as 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am'" (Chimakonam, 2014, p. 73). An individual, according to Mbiti, "is simply part of the whole and depends on the corporate group" (quoted in Hallen, 2000, p. 142). On the same account Oruka

adds, “Within communalism, the individualism and the society are taken to have egalitarian mutual obligation” (Graness and Kresse, 1997, p. 172).

The approach herein is not to claim that an individual needs not search for his freedom from the tradition that binds the society he/she belongs to. Rather, it is to argue that African philosophy is the philosophy of human values, and Ubuntu, which is an account of human togetherness that makes the life of an individual meaningful. A philosophical thought on human races as one member of the same family and one’s humanness to the humanity of others is an enthusiasm of African philosophy. Belonging to the same family does not imply the metaphysical oneness, but to mean humanness makes us one with diversified perspectives. It has communalism orientation according to Ekanem (2012), to which, I think, Western explanation of universalism should consider for the purpose of humanity. Otherwise, it would be pseudo-humanism, according to Cesaire (1972). African philosophy refers the African conception of human values and needs to make aware the global community about them so that the rest of the world needs to rectify injustices of globalization, individualism, liberalism, and capitalism. In other words, “Ubuntu as a form of African philosophy thus blends in with another potential, imagined or real gifts of Africa to the wider world” (Binsbergen, 2001, p. 58).

The blend of African philosophy with other potentials is an attempt to a critical examination of humanity. This suggests that “the future philosophy of the world must then take into account the great speculative systems of all humanity” (Wiredu, 2004, p. 31). African philosophy is always for the articulation of common values of humanity regardless of cultural varieties. The way Gyekye argues is comprehensive to this claim.

... although the people of the world live in different cultural environments, there is nevertheless a common ground of shared human experiences, and hence there certainly are some basic questions relating to their existence on this planet that might commonly be asked by them, questions that are bound to exercise their minds as humans. Such questions, I believe, may be universal, transcending, cultural and historical frontiers, even though the philosophical doctrines and

propositions put forward in answer to them may, in fact, be very dissimilar and divergent. (Cite in Kanu, 2014, p. 92).

African philosophy, furthermore, is the philosophy of keeping up one's identity, i.e. it is the search for an African identity (Wiredu, 2004). In addition, it lessons ways of keeping the sense of human togetherness to global citizens since it describes about the life of communalism. It is the legal weapon of fighting human being's alienation from communal components. Yet, Western individualism is the new thought imposed on African, which I think, aims at isolating an African from the society he/she belongs to. On the contrary, African philosophy is the celebration of mutual *telos* that describe humanity, although the environment that global citizens live in is diversified.

### **2.1.3 Golden Rule of Global Ethics and Traditional Values in African Philosophy**

An ethical intercultural integration on the problems of the entire world for the goal of humanity and commonly shared values is the gift of African philosophy to the rest of the world. When solemn problems of a globalized world increase day by day, co-integration of the entire world of humanity is important. The golden rule of global ethics governs the integration of states in globalization so as to discuss the impacts of Western hegemony. With regard to this, the African system of thought, cultural practices, socioeconomic conditions, and so on would be reflected so the rest of the world learns a lot from them. An ethical intercultural approach to learning from others would enable states in globalization to sort out global problems for the value of humanity.

Ever since capitalism emerged as an economic and political ideology, the essence of humanity is being degraded by a belief in wealth. In a globalized world, wherein money becomes the sole measure of everything, African philosophy rises up to shine golden rule of global ethics. Such ethics is about "valuing traditional cultural values in such a way that they could be useful for humanity at large" (Bekele, 1998, p. 66). Besides, it is committed to overcoming unequal partnership through center-periphery stream by showing the source of truth and knowledge from diversified cultural and traditional values.

African philosophy, accordingly, is an ethical orientation to develop equality, freedom and social justice among nations so as to revive the lost traditional values and humanity. On account of this, African philosophy describes how Africans can be Africans and at the same time global citizens dedicated to valuing traditional values that manifest the virtue of humanity. Valuing such values relied on the investigation of the past and the contemporary problems of the world caused by Western hegemony and globalization. To overcome problems of the continent in particular and the entire world in general, African philosophy also investigates global issues that demand reason, which upholds the golden rule of global ethics. A rational golden rule of global ethics is the manner by which both Africans and the West search for solutions to the impacts of globalization that affect global citizens. Philosophy as such is important to inquire such impacts of globalization and valuing traditional cultural values. Henry argues:

Philosophy is a distinct intellectual practice that raises certain kinds of questions *-related to the impacts of globalization* and attempts to answer them by a variety of styles of argument that draw on formal logic, paradox, coherence, the meaningful logic of lived experiences *-i.e. ethics*, and the synthetic powers of totalizing systems. Philosophy appears as an open but diverse discursive field in which ontological, epistemological, logical, ethical, transcendental, historical, and other formations flow into one another. (2000, p. 2, emphasis added)

Such a thing is also the task of African philosophy and it is an intellectual practice not only dedicated to decolonize the continent from colonial incursion, but also to challenge the intrusion of globalization. The primary function of philosophy as has been stated is to pursue wisdom about nature. The same sentiment goes to African philosophy, which has pragmatic functions to manage the self and the relations with others in a given cultural and technological exchanges. “[African] philosophy is one branch of the multitude of cultural activities which in concert with great socioeconomic and technological transformations from the overall field of human civilization” (Crowther, 2003, p. 7). Such a pragmatic function is the search for an ethical intercultural approach to global problems which will suggest the responsibilities of the dominant and the marginalized.

The issue herein is that not only co-integration is enough, but also “ethics is essential in tackling global problems and in making wise choices” (Workineh, 2009, p. 2)

African philosophy in its global approach also acknowledges the role cultural values play in settling problems of the world for the better conditions of human beings. Besides the benefits, Western science and technology have caused impacts on the lives of the Third World. The roles of traditional values to reduce such impacts are displaced by Western science and technology. Science seems to stress on the benefits of its mission to improve the lives of its practitioners. However, the search for traditional values is vital and the West should not severely denounce Africa’s interest in this. P. O. Bodunrin portrays “at a time when many people in the West believe that philosophy has become impoverished and needs redirection, a philosophical study of traditional societies may be the answer” (cited in Bekele, 1998, p. 63). This brings, according to Bekele, new and useful ideas from traditional cultures into the established philosophical tradition, i.e. “world philosophy” as Janz named it (2007). This helps Africans to add values on the achievements of globalization in settling problems that the globalized world faces.

In the contributions of traditional values to settle global issues, pursuing the role of the sage is important because a sage gives values to cultures that can cope with knowledge and science. Oruka said, “The sage aims at the ethical betterment of the community that he lives in...the sage has...two policies: he has science, the knowledge plus ethical obligation for himself, for the community and the world” (cited in Bekele, 1998, p. 67). As a European philosophy upholds the seal of its “superior” cultural thoughts, African philosophy upholds critical, systematic and analytical African worldviews imprinted in African traditional cultures. As a result, African world views are not restricted to African geography, but transcend the boundary, and contribute to the global community to address global problems. This suggests the commitment to African philosophy to

bring the intercultural forum as a possible way to make Western achievements an equal partner to traditional values of the rest of the world. I will discuss this in the last section of this chapter.

## **2.2 The Meaning of African Philosophy**

It has been discussed that the meaning and nature of African philosophy are controversial because of the existence of varieties of conceptions about it. Oruka summarizes those conceptions into four trends: Ethno-philosophy, professional philosophy, nationalist-ideological philosophy and sage philosophy (quoted in Graness and Kresse, 1997). Traditional cultural values that this thesis defends are valued by Ethno-philosophy. In my view, group worldviews may include myth and non-rational beliefs, and they are not to be tolerated to cope with the achievements of science and technology. Professional philosophy, on the other hand, is to be treated, for Africa's future fate requires the commitment of its intellectuals' independent thinking. Keeping the legacy of nationalist-ideological philosophy is the base to search for African identity and "self-definition". Philosophic sagacity is worth pursuing, for its role makes a society better with the analysis of the achievements of science and indigenous knowledge.

Furthermore, the meaning of African philosophy is debatable with regard to the issues of who made it, criteria, and contents. Regarding its author, some assume a written text by an African and declared as philosophical by the writer, is an African philosophy (Roberts, 1998). This, I think, is a very narrow conception, for it excludes the contribution of philosophical oral traditions or sagacious philosophy. Similarly, African philosophy is conceived as a body of texts and intellectual philosophical discourses written both by Africans and non-Africans. Based on this, one may conclude that being written is a criterion for a thought to be philosophical. However, I contend, a philosophical activity that is grounded in African cultures, both in texts and oral traditions is African philosophy. Moreover, writers on it might not be native Africans alone

because “African philosophy has piled from contributions by both fellow Africans and non-Africans” (Graness and Kresse, 1997, p. 102).

It is obvious that philosophy is not apart from the society. African philosophy then is a totality of philosophical knowledge that attempts to grapple with philosophical questions associated with global impacts in Africa. According to Balogun, it is “a critical reflection, analysis and synthesis of African cultural beliefs in reality” (2014, p. 58). He summed up the definition of African philosophy as follows:

... it can be seen as a rational and systematic inquiry into the fundamental problems confronting the African world, with a view to understanding and providing plausible solutions to them. African philosophy can be defined as an analytical, critical, and reconstructive evaluation of both African traditional cultural experiences and modern cultural heritage in the pursuit of useful living for Africans (ibid).

Although it is restricted to the native authors, T. Serequeberhan defines it as “it is done in the area of logic, metaphysics, ethics or history of philosophy” (quoted in Okafor, 1997, p. 260). This conception, I think, is legitimate even though who owns it never goes beyond the geography of Africa. It excludes philosophical works of P. Tempels and G. James which contributed a lot to the development of African philosophy. So, Serequeberhan’s conclusion that “if African philosophers were to engage in debates on Plato’s epistemology or theoretical identities, their work would qualify as African philosophy” (quoted in Okafor, 1997, p. 260) is exclusive. Mudimbe sheds a light on this claiming that “the notion of African philosophy refers to contributions of Africans practicing philosophy within the defined framework of the discipline and its historical tradition” (1988, p. 7).

Ekanem, in his response to the negative depictions of the West on Africa, states that “by African philosophy, we mean the critical reflection and the asking of fundamental questions, the seeking of meaning and understanding within the bias and context of African cultural setting and experience” (2012, p. 55). His conception of African philosophy is inclusive of non-indigenous

philosophers. One way or another, what matters is not the whereabouts of authors. Instead, African philosophy is the reflection on how Africans make sense of their existence and the entire world. It is based on the African cultural experience and reality to contribute to resolving the problems that the continent faces via globalization. In its contribution to contemporary philosophy to settle global issues, it is the process of critical thinking and analysis of issues both with the African and non-African thinkers.

Accordingly, African philosophy is a work concerned with global issues beyond African problems to which solutions are rooted in traditional cultural values. It is for this reason that Balogun argues “African philosophy of today is a reflective and critical activity and in both cases, “yesterday” and “today,” ‘African philosophy is evoked by wonder and concerns about human experience’” (2014, p. 60). So far, “Africana philosophy is a species of Africana thought, which involves theoretical questions raised by critical engagements with ideas in Africana cultures and their hybrid, mixed, or creolized forms worldwide” (Gordon, 2008, p. 1).

Another debatable issue on the meaning of African philosophy is its content and method. It is right to claim that the contents and methods of a given philosophy are not apart from culture. Culture embraces every aspect in a given society, including worldviews of the people in that culture. Based on this, it is sound to argue that African philosophy includes “African spirituality, religion, cultural tradition, and activism” on the one hand, and it is “modeled closely on European forms of disciplinary methodology” on the other (Janz, 2007, p. 692). With regard to its contribution to the global community, it considers the particularistic and the universalistic notion of philosophy. From particularistic notion, African philosophy needs to build African cultural nationalism, i.e. being an African with African solutions. From the universalistic notion, it helps us to make an intercultural dialogue and polylogue on common values of humanity.

### **2.3 African Philosophy: An Enthusiasm of Intercultural Approach**

African philosophy goes on to allege that “neither science nor critical reflection is an exclusive monopoly of the West [and] it is unscientific, unhistorical and unphilosophical for the West to arrogate to itself the monopoly of science and critical thought” (Graness and Kresse, 1997, p. 105). Globalization is elaborated by one culture, i.e. Western culture. So, how can globalization make Western universality claim proper wherein humanity is in question? Does the Universalism attempt embrace the benefits of globalization that endorse African traditional values of humanity? Is Western science enough to overcome problems of the rest of the world, in general, and Africa, in particular? I think, the intercultural approach would be a solution for both the West and Africa to deal with the importance of science and important traditional values. The dialogue between the North and the South is at the center of African philosophy to accommodate achievements of Western science and traditional principles of Africa. African philosophy, in this regard, demands the West to bring its thought together for a possible understanding of the South and vice versa. This ensures the sense of humanity in a globalized world wherein important values of human beings are welcomed. An intercultural approach, I assume, is a means to defend the true universal values that make up the true humanity.

The emergence of South- South Cooperation (SSC) is important to make dialogue with the North. Western science and technology are premised to be universal and the only means to transform human lives. Later, they were exported to the South. Unfortunately, they challenged and endangered the values and the lives of global citizens, from which Africa is highly affected. A nuclear weapon, terrorism, carbon emission, and global warming, migration, and epidemic diseases are products of human hands via science. It is in this respect that Bekele, (1998 and 2004);

Wimmer, (2007) and Udeani, (2007) suggest intercultural communication between the North and the South as the most important.

Udeani suggested intercultural hermeneutics<sup>xiv</sup> which, according to him involves mediation and ‘message bringing’ both to Africans and non-African. For instance, Robert Mugabe’s message<sup>xv</sup> to the UN via Ban ki-Moon to reform the Security Council of the UN, African’s search for compensation from industrialized states due to excessive carbon emission that hurts their mode of production. In the role that [intercultural communication] plays to find out common solutions for the commonly shared global problems that are aggravated by science and technology, Bekele wrote:

In pursuing the development of science and technology without paying attention to the effects that come with it, mankind acted one-sidedly and committed the dismal error of putting our lives at a great risk. With a definite interest in view mankind failed to appreciate not only the kind of economic impact that they will have the overwhelming majority but also the social and moral aspects of such developments. In a world that has become small today and where the effects of one’s action are not only noticed by but also have a definite impact on others it will be wise to inquire into different cultures can contribute to overcoming the kind of difficulties. (1998, p. 64)

Wimmer also prefers “polylogue” to “dialogue” to make intercultural communications possible. He remarks “one should not expect philosophical theories to be well found whose authors stem from one single cultural tradition” (2007, p. 89). His stress on polylogue, I think, limits the dialogue between two poles such as the North and the South. Globalization, as has been stated, is an attempt to homogenize global culture with Western one, and dialogue is preferable for those who claim cultural superiority and the marginalized.

The intercultural approach between the North and the South creates the opportunity for the flow of “diverse opinions and reactions within the global community” (Udeani, 2007, p. 52). This defines a closer understanding of each other on shared values; if impossible, it helps them agree to disagree on differences. Within an intercultural global setting, an unconditional conviction<sup>xvi</sup> of the truth and the justness of one’s own basic convictions hampers the possibility for a genuine polylogue between cultures. A sort of “relativization” of one’s own understanding and willingness to reconsider such convictions in polylogue is required, according to Note, Fernet-Betancourt,

Eastermann, and Aerts (2009). And “without this, any intercultural encounter is doomed to fail from the start” (p. 2)

Open-mindedness then is an important asset of intercultural approach to making “awareness of differences between cultures large or small and how understanding may pass between them” (Bell, 2002, p. 2). Bell further argues that:

Because African philosophy is embedded in its postcolonial reality it speaks to Europe and the West out of its lived experience with Europe and the West. This necessitates a two-way dialogue. The very fact of a non-African trying to understand Africa requires the engagement of this part of the dialogue and further requires some equipment for the engagement—cross-cultural equipment from an aesthetic point of view. (ibid, p. 48)

In this situation “Africa is called upon to address, understand and interpret both her own and the global predicaments and cultural diversity for herself within the context of our today’s global age” (Udeani, 2007, p. 53). The subject of intercultural approach is a right way of being understood and understand others about the contemporary global issues that affect global citizens. In this way of understanding, each other “African philosophy thrives on mutual criticism in a culture of rational dialogue” (Balogun, 2014, p. 58).

Philosophy, whose task is a critical examination, understanding, and criticizing issues, requires good communication and understanding of each other. Accordingly, philosophy can be seen as “experience”. According to Bell, “a central aim of philosophy is to “see something as it is.” If this is achieved, we have a reasonable benchmark for approaching another “thing as it is”” (2002, p. 1). On this similar explanation, Bekele notes that philosophy has a role to play in understanding the intellectual basis of life, and concludes African philosophy emerges for this purpose (1998). Balogun emphasizes on the underlying philosophy of communalism, which, according to him includes work together with others, appreciate others, and dialogue with others (2014). The rationale is to build rationality that is rooted in culture because intercultural approach helps “each group [to] know what values the other groups contribute or can contribute to the

universal cultural treasure” (Mabona, 2015, p. 3). Besides, African philosophers have a role in building such rationality rooted in culture to disclose Western impositions on African aspects and challenge them. Teffo and Roux substantiate the role of African philosophers arguing that

The debate between African philosophers and philosophers belonging to other traditions or cultures is as important—no culture and particularly no philosophical perspective can develop in isolation. Such communication poses the challenge to other traditions and particularly to European (Western) philosophers to note the differences in perspective and to take the trouble to understand them. (2003, p. 207)

The intercultural approach also involves comparing and contrasting varieties of cultures to which values of diversified cultures are assigned to be discussed. “As the world becomes “smaller” year by year, it is increasingly important to develop an understanding of cultural centers around the globe that are different from our own” (Blocker, 1999, p. 1). To put values of different cultures into comparison is one way to grasp the roles they play in a given society. The contribution of traditional values to resolve problems that the continent faces thus would be understood as if it is not lesser than the role Western science contributes. Comparing and contrasting the art, religions, thought system and practices of different cultures is necessary to consider the roles of traditional values with the achievements of science. Comparison, on the other hand, is a key to an understanding of the roles of values that come from interacting with our conditions (Ekanem, 2012). Comparison is one part of the intercultural approach.

The contemporary global issues such as terrorism, global warming, global migration, humanitarian issues, and so on need to be discussed on the intercultural forum. On this forum, Western cultural hegemony and the claim of universality has to be taken into account. Most importantly, “the relevance of cultural traditions to the present and the future has to be analyzed” in the intercultural approach (Wimmer, 2007, p. 87). The best thing to be done in the forum is outlining similarities and differences among cultures of the parties involved. Among others, African philosophy as a legitimate discipline that shares some similarities with Western philosophy

(Makinde, 1988) is the issue to be considered. As “all the major issues that have engaged the attention of the philosopher in Asia, America, etc. can be found in African philosophy” (Obenga, 2004, p. 49). The major issues of cultural values in the West are also engaged in Africa. This shows that there is relativism in each philosophy and culture as there are common views among them to be put into consideration.

To sum up, intercultural approach undertakes the relative and universal notions of cultural heritages, for instance, to take closer understanding on the meaning and nature of African philosophy. African philosophy is best suited that echoes these notions as points of references to negotiate Western ambition of universalization with the contributions of traditional values of Africa. Looking forward to the 21st century, Janz expects such philosophy in its function to find new conversations, ways of including groups that are currently under-represented, develop conversations among scholars themselves rather than focusing on interpreting traditional culture or applying Western modes of thought to African issues (2007). He argues “African philosophy stands as both an important critical and reflective moment in world philosophy, and a contribution to the world of philosophy by working out how... philosophy can honor its ‘debts and duties’” (2007, p. 700). Based on this, “the duties of African philosophy which hold a contingent rather than an arbitrary interest in the African life-world would be to address issues that border the African whether in the present or potentially in the future” (Chimakonam, 2015, p. 465). Therefore, African philosophy is “inevitably a philosophy of cross-cultural conversation and encounter” (Janz, 2007, p. 696).

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. The Contributions of African Philosophy**

A philosophy that does not try to approach itself to the problems of people of a given society faces may be a mere thought that does not have essentials in that society. The same assumption goes to African philosophy if it does not play this role. In describing this, Bekele (2002) argues, “an African philosophy that attempts to be only speculation without having to contribute to the solutions of Africa’s problems is a luxury that Africa cannot afford at present” (p. 215). Chukwu (2002), also contends the need of applying African philosophy for the problems of Africa. Regarding this, he says “African philosophy should clarify for Africans the social and moral issues of our times and thereby contribute to the aspirations of Africans to attain a more ordered and meaningful existence” (2002, p. 247). The problems that African philosophy tries to address itself to are the socio-cultural, economic and political problems caused and aggravated by Western hegemony and globalization. In challenging such causes, African philosophy plays an indispensable roles.

#### **3.1 The Need for Challenging False Universalism**

It has been discussed that the effort of the West in its relations with the rest of the world is to export its local values, which is antithetical to the traditional values of Africa. The idea of humanity and the golden rule of global ethics are also the issues affected by Western domination. Globalization empowers the West to secure exporting its theories, paradigms, religious practices and values to the rest of the world. I contend that this westernizing attempt alters the truth of humanity and it is antithetical to an African sense of humanity and the shared values of diversified cultures.

The echo of Universalism is illusory because the West alone remains as the hegemonic actor of a globalized world to “universalize” occidental values. It is obvious that the rest of the world

hitherto remains marginalized wherein the few such as Western states alone are beneficiaries. Globalization merely benefits only a few and besides it fails to protect the most important parts of humanity. As long as marginalization continues the claim of Universalism is an illusion for the reason that the West is not in action to universalize the true universal values. The contemporary situations of a globalized world indicate that remnants of colonialism are not kicked off from the global system, particularly from Africa. Racism, exploitation of human and natural resources, civil war, and terrorism are some of the features of the global system. Ideological resistance and conflict of interests are the other features just in case of Western hegemonic involvement to globalize itself in the system. So, the Universalism is the Universalism of the powerful, which is a partial and distorted Universalism (Wallerstein, nd). The reason for this, according to Wallerstein is because “it has been put forward by pan-European leaders and intellectuals in their search to pursue the dominant strata of the modern world system” (nd, p. xiv). This is “Europe Universalism”, according to him, which shows the universalizing attempt of local values.

Globalization in this regard caused a global village of privileged people whose borders are impenetrable to the poor and unskilled. The dominant actors of globalization are very few; they are Western states and their organizations that affect and marginalize Africa. So, such Universalism is not inclusive even in the virtue of humanity with its most important parts such as social justice, freedom, and equality. This is not surprising since we are not new to it and the goals of colonialism were to universalize European values. Colonialism attempted the goals via “transplanting various European ideas, concepts, and norms, such as territorial integrity and state sovereignty, into Africa and other parts of the non-European world” (Makinda and Okumu, 2008, p. 15). Globalization did the same thing and serves as a channel of disseminating “Eurocentric languages” such as liberalism and capitalism to Africa. The West continues extending itself into

Africa via globalization, which is a totalitarian act of transplanting new ideologies into the non-Western hemisphere.

The totalitarian act of the West denies the contributions of important traditional values of Africa that are deemed to make their societies better. African philosophy compiles traditional values and principles that are value orientations to humanity. On the contrary, Western science and technology dominate the rest of the world to replace the contributions of traditional values. As a result, the kind of Universalism that the West is committed to assuring is merely the aim to assure Westernization and its triumph in the globalization system. However, it faces oppositions from various parts of the world because it goes against the values of “Others”. Observing the multidirectional resistances of Western domination of the system through its alien ideologies, Bekele wrote,

The Western world is no more in a situation where it can dominate the world alone. The civilizing mission of the Westerners cannot materialize anymore as they used to do. To understand this, one has to simply see the problems that the Western world in general and the USA, in particular, are facing from terrorism. The environmental problems of the 21st century, poverty, diseases like AIDS, and many other problems can no more be the problems of one country or region. (2004, p. 40)

The passage above explains that “given that the West presents itself as the embodiment and inventor of the universal, we must protest even more loudly that its universal is so peculiar and that its global is so local” (Taiwo, 1998, p. 2). Mabona forwards similar response to the universal attempt of the West when he said, “The European way is, therefore, still The Way. Nonetheless, nobody needs to idolize this image because what the world really needs is the complete image of humanity patterned on the various ways of thought and forms of culture of the diverse ethnic complexes composing the human family” (2015, p. 3).

Religion was another motor the West used to export its local beliefs and values to Africa. Christianity was best suited to do so. “European colonialism,” Dallmayr states “always coupled exploitation with a missionary goal: the spreading of a (supposedly) superior culture to the rest of

the world” (2015, p. 2). “Colonialism” in this respect, according to Dallmayr, “subscribed to an imperialist version of the Enlightenment project by extolling the virtues of the Western style of Universalism at the price of local or traditional modes of thought and practice” (ibid). Following this, African religions and other traditional practices were characterized as superstitious and later replaced by Western Christianity with its alien practices.

Nowadays, globalization replaced colonialism as a “new” way of extolling the virtues of Western multidimensional notions of capitalism, liberalism, and Neoliberalism. It is for this reason that globalization is associated with universalization and reflect Western hegemonic ideas and interests. However, the primary attempt of African philosophy is to recognize the plurality of cultures with diversified values and traditions that embrace the virtue of humanity. The purpose of African philosophy in such a recognition is to challenge the false universalization of the West. It is also to recognize and celebrate the commonly shared values among diversified cultures because they govern the whole of humanity. The meaningfulness of the shared values in case relies on the relative aspects of each culture, philosophy, and ideology. Nevertheless, globalization associates everything with unipolar inclinations, economic and cultural imperialistic tendencies towards unifying the world with Western values (Igboin, 2011).

The unifying attempt does not suggest that the world is not connected via the internet, communication, import, and export, etc. I mean rather it is impossible to create a harmonized Western world of a global village. It is rather an ideal attempt by the West to universalize its local values in order to restructure the features of the non-Western hemisphere. The ambition to create a global village unified with the true universal values is impossible “because the rich North has long since built a fortress so that the poor South remains imprisoned in its poorhouse” (K’Orinda-

Yimbo, 2008, p. 93). Globalization, according to K'Orinda-Yimbo, will always remain to benefit the already rich peoples of the West (ibid).

The denial of the very nature of Africans is an evidence for the impossibility of the ambition. Fanon argues that “the European practice of science was such that to achieve objectivity, it often denied the existence of the black in its construction of the human being. Universality was, therefore, a door available only through the exclusion of blacks” (quoted in Nissim-Sabat, 2009, p. 101). The exclusion of blacks, Fanon adds, is the impossibility of the universal attempt that waved an artificial structure of a single human race above another (ibid). Furthermore, according to Fanon, “This circumstance was an inhuman relationship, in which there were those who were below the realm of human being and consequently another group “above” humanity” (ibid). Messay on this states that “a notion of the human person that has no room for black essence is not universal, much less appropriate for black peoples” (2004, p. 66).

Therefore, in a situation where there is the denial of the humanity of “Others” the universality and superiority claims of Western local values and the human race are impossible. To achieve ultimate Universalism might be difficult, but a proper Universalism that prioritizes human dignity and respects the identities of each human race is crucial. A proper Universalism, which considers important values of humanity, science and technology, traditional values, shared values such as social justice, freedom and equality is the message of African philosophy to the global community. African philosophy, in other words, needs to challenge false golden rules that the West articulates to the global system.

### **3.2 Challenging the Impacts of Globalization in Africa**

During colonialism, an African mind was converted into Western ones. Only the black body was not taken away. This continued until post-independence. The black body with Western spirit alters Africans into Afro-western citizens<sup>xvii</sup>. An African was also culturally separated from

African values and forced to adopt Western ones. In a word, the spirit of Africans has been taken away from an African descent. It is for this reason that African philosophy is set to make an African mind free of Western impulse. African philosophy is the key to point the necessities of decolonizing the African mind. I think, this helps an African to reshape African ways of thinking, although an African is embraced with globalization that pronounces Western culture.

Nevertheless, African philosophy has a lot to do in challenging negative impacts of globalization in that its primary duty is to back up the identity and prestige that Africans have lost. In so doing, I think, it would not fail to stand against the challenges of Western practices exported into Africa through globalization. This can be done by making Africans its agents and by educating them how to emancipate themselves from the transplantations to come. The main purpose to do this is to recreate an African road or self-designed way (Ogutu, 2002). So as to recreate such a road or way African philosophy needs to challenge the impacts of globalization, and below are some of its contributions.

Firstly, it enables Africa to recognize its philosophy that is embedded in African diverse cultures. This suggests the formation of an African center of philosophical traditions so that its descents, most importantly, Sages reflect their philosophies. The sages' philosophical reflection would be a possible input to make a policy used to challenge external impacts. To put another way, the need for cultural policy to make Africa free from the impacts of globalization is urgently needed (Braganca and Wallerstein, 1982). African philosophy, in this case, becomes, “a reflection in its place, culturally, disciplinarily, and intellectually... its place in the formation of identities of its practitioners” (Janz, 2009, p. 6). According to Ibrahim (2013), this is “indigenization” of African ways, which I think, brings the sense of African nationalism<sup>xviii</sup>.

Secondly, African philosophy helps to build the sense of African nationalism based on the

African philosophical traditions. It also contributes to organizing the political system that works with African ways and solutions. In achieving this goal, the AU is the sole agency responsible for making a possible dialogue and polylogue with others. African nationalism helps the agency to resist “Eurocentric languages” in the making of domestic policies and other laws. The reason is, “Nationalism is a combination of [African] culture as identity and culture as communication” (Mazrui, 2004, p. 473). For such communication, “the traditional way of life must be the point of departure” (Egbunu, 2013, p. 140). Since African philosophy instructs an African cultural, political, economic and social lives of the people, it puts forward the need to make African policies African. The policy, in turn, will determine the relations of Africa with the rest of the world to be based on “Pan-Africa”. African philosophy of Pan-African Nationalism (PAN) is thus, the best way for Africans to understanding Africa’s position in global politics. Accordingly, as it enabled Africa to redeem from the yoke of colonialism, it also helps Africa to reduce the Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization.

Thirdly, it suggests ways toward an African philosophy of education that helps African educational agencies to make free their curricula from the domination of “Eurocentric languages”. Recognition of the valuable traditional value of Africa is part of the African philosophy of education. However, “we largely have educational systems that do not have respect for the homegrown values and various forms of indigenous knowledge” (Bekele, 2002, p. 214). Nevertheless, a philosophy of education that does not recognize the homegrown values of Africa is meaningless. Education with homegrown values empowers the African people with knowledge of themselves. The rationale is an attempt to make education Afro-centered by which Africans search for defining themselves (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013; Hallen, 2002 and Mazrui, 2004). In this regard, African philosophy “interrogates the ways in which education can address questions of African identity and the place of the individual in society” (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013, p.

50). In such interrogation, African education must be proposed to strike a proportional balance between the achievements of both African indigenous knowledge and the Western science (Bekele, 2002). Moreover, “African leaders should concentrate their efforts on educating their people and educating them on their civic, social, economic and cultural rights and responsibilities, and empowering them” (Ibrahim, 2013, p. 91). The sole purpose is to consider ways of placing African students at the center of their own cultures and historical background capable of emancipating themselves from foreign influences.

Fourthly, African philosophy equips Africans to develop “the sense of African humanism and socialism as values of common African heritage” (Bell, 2002, p. 36). I think, this would empower the whole of African people to discover where they are and are not as African Nationalist-ideological philosophers did (More, 2004). Self-consciousness and sense of belongings would follow so that an African sense of global citizenship<sup>xix</sup> emerges. This would be a powerful element of reviving true humanity which would be possible through African Cultural Revolution (ACR)<sup>xx</sup>.

Fifthly, the African philosophy and African philosophy of education empower Africans to organize centers of African global studies to search for traditional values of African cultures. The search is a step to cope up important traditional values with the achievements of science and technology. This, in other words, is the recognition of African indigenous knowledge that could be the powerhouse of African solutions to resolve problems of the continent. Being equipped with African solutions would allow Africans to challenge the impacts of globalization and handle African problems. The goal of African philosophy is thus to create African solutions via African philosophy of education and make Africans committed to Africanize all aspects. The commitment is to question the Western educational system<sup>xxi</sup> so that it will be able “to consider itself as an equal partner in the quest of Africa for a change in the lives of African people” (Bekele, 2007, p. 122).

Finally, African philosophy in the contemporary situation is a discipline designed to make

Africans think about globalization, both its benefits and impacts. It invites Africans to be global citizens in the system reflecting their African worldviews that consider the pluralistic notion of culture. As a result, Africans would be in a strategic position to solve contemporary problems and discover future problems because the pluralistic notion of culture enables them to discover the past (Hallen, 2002). As well, the emergence and development of intercultural approach follow.

### **3.3 Rethinking Colonial Discourse and the Direction of Decolonization**

According to Okrah, philosophy is a conceptual response to the portrayals and problems forwarded in any given period for a given human race and society (2003, p. 13). As it has been stated African philosophy emerged amid lots of contradictions and oppositions from the West. Some Western philosophies and colonial discourses were seen as proposals of transforming Africa by Western solutions. The reason is that African mentality was characterized as irrational, and the Western way of thinking is seen as “superior” and “absolute”. Later reason becomes an issue of debate in African philosophy. Masolo states, “As we know and debate them today, several key issues in African philosophy are a critical part of the wider postcolonial cultural critique that has occurred across the disciplines” (2000, p. 149). Many of these issues, according to him, may continue to address what some continue to perceive as Africa’s need for total cultural independence (ibid).

The articulation of ideas and thoughts on African philosophy in the postcolonial period has made it possible to rethink Western philosophical issues and problems with the new proportional conceptual scopes (Masolo, 2000). Accordingly, this makes possible for African philosophers to participate in an intercultural philosophical discourse without sacrificing the independence of African modes of thought (ibid). Redemption of the African mind from the Western master mentality seems the soul of the debate, which is the underlying principle to place Africa in a better position. Messay stresses, “rethinking of philosophical concepts in the direction of

deconstruction for the purpose of achieving mental decolonization teams up modernization with philosophical questions” (2004, p. xii). He further wrote:

Nothing can be accomplished in the direction of overcoming marginality unless Africa repositions itself by means of philosophical premises free of Eurocentric conditionings. Decolonization is primarily a philosophical problem, given that the emancipation of the African mind from the debilitating ascendancy of Western episteme is its inaugural moment. (ibid)

Globalization reflects the Western ideological power in the global system with its local ideology and values. As African philosophy approaches to rethinking this “the struggles against those powers logically should start by deconstructing that ideology” (Kasongo, 2010, p. 62). Regarding this, Hallen wrote, “if African philosophers do not challenge the universality of [Western] paradigm when they pursue an interest in things epistemological with reference to African systems of thought, they will find themselves in a compromising situation” (2000, p. 34). In addition to this, there is an alternative strategy to reconsider the universalizing attempt of Western discourses via intercultural approach. Reassessing Western academic philosophy is the core issue to be seen in this approach. An equal hearing and understanding of non-Western systems of thought as the right ways to the truth must be an issue of reassessing academic philosophy (Hallen, 2000). “In this way, at the very least, they can become the subjects of detailed study and analysis by philosophers that they deserve to be” (ibid, p. 34).

Rethinking colonial discourses also seems to suggest the modification of African history for the reason that African history is really the history of African awakening. “The history of Africa needs rewriting, for up till now it has often been masked, faked, distorted, mutilated, by ‘force of circumstance’ i.e. through ignorance or self-interest” (Ki-Zerbo, 1981, p. 2). Nkrumah also wrote, “Our history needs to be written as the history of our society, not as the story of European adventure” (1970, p. 63). If this is possible, “what we understand of our history is what we understand of ourselves” (Myers, 1992, p. vii).

### **3.4 The Commitment to Equality and Freedom to the Global Community**

The African struggle for freedom and equality is not a new phenomenon. The emergence of Pan-Africanism witnesses to this. Based on this, it would not be mistaken to claim that African philosophy emerged on the notion of Pan-Africanism. “African philosophers remind us of a new way to rethink the very concepts of justice and responsibility” (Bell, 2002, p. 66). Such a new way is Africans’ revolution to revive African traditional values, the sense of African humanism and socialism to which Pan-Africanism is dedicated. These are elements of Pan-Africanism that embrace equality and freedom. “Pan-Africanism was the struggle for racial equality and human dignity by African-Americans and the black people in the Caribbean” (Makinda and Okumu, 2008, p. 19).

The primary goal of nationalist-ideological philosophers (Pan- Africanists) was the search for the dignity, respect, and emancipation of the people of Africa from foreign influences (More, 2004). The legacy continued until the emergence of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which pursued the liberation movement of Pan-Africanists. Making the African liberation movement worldwide, I think, was a movement of global equality and freedom. An Afrocentric inquiry was also seen as the agency for regaining freedom (Poe, 2003). In the attempt of regaining and fighting for freedom, African philosophy is the sole purpose of addressing not only problems of the continent but also global problems. Pursuing such freedom and equality in the contemporary global order is the basic thing, although they face the enslavement of Western ideology and “Eurocentric language”. Observing the situation Fanon avers as if the inhuman conditions of today are not differing from the inhumanity of past experiences (1967). Fanon argues that “all sources of exploitation resemble one another; they are all applied against the same “object”: man” (1967, p. xviii-xix). In this situation, African philosophy calls attention to global citizens to strive for their equality and freedom.

Nkrumah's conception of African personality is a commitment to assure freedom and equality for the people of African descents not only in the continent but also beyond the continent's boundary. Nkrumah said, "It is only in conditions of total freedom and independence from foreign rule and interference that the aspirations of our people will see real fulfillment and the African genius find its best expression" ("Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah," nd, p. 5). In the making of aware of the African notion of humanism to the global community, Prah suggests Pan-Africanism "as a democratic and emancipatory movement shares a common inspiration with the rest of humanity in its historical drive towards freedom, justice, and self-determination" (quoted in Workneh, 2006, p. 156). I think, this explains to the world that African philosophy is committed to lesson global freedom and equality that realize the very sense of humanity.

### **3.5 Searching for African Identity**

Nowadays, the issue of globalization is the contemporary challenge of African identity, although the challenge is not separately seen from the slave trade, colonialism, and racism (Kanu, 2013). These challenges and the emergence of Pan-Africanism are not also separately seen in Africa's search for the original identity. The essence of Pan-Africanism embraces Africans' conception of African personality that is embedded in African traditional values. African personality as such "is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 79). The search for African identity has been seen as central to African philosophy. Situma writes "the search of African identity is essentially one of the discourses of Africans" (2002, p. 101).

The search for the original identity is the search for "being" an African, which is always in the making. Achebe demonstrates "it is, of course, true that the African identity is still in the making. There is no a final identity that is African. But, at the same time, there is an identity coming into existence. And it has a certain context and a certain meaning" (cited in Appiah, 1992, p. 73). In

searching for African identity and in questioning the universality claim of the West, “African philosophy was necessarily deconstructive and the next moment is a reconstruction” (Hook, 2002, p. 92). In that case, “African philosophy can be identified as constitutive of a post-colonial search for a uniquely African identity, which has become lost amid the brutality of the European rape of the African continent” (Deacon, 2003, p. 115).

African historical reconstruction, according to Deacon, is a corrective to this and it is intended to present the true picture of the African identity (ibid). As colonialism awakened Africans’ consciousness, it helped them to search for their being Africans. Following this, African philosophy becomes the discourse of confirming African identity that is rooted in African ideas of traditional cultures, values, socialism and humanism. Such a discourse still needs to discover African identity since Western subjugation is not over in the contemporary globalization system. Globalization merely marks Western science and technology in Africa at the cost of African identities and values. African philosophy has a function to deconstruct the imposition of Western science in Africa and revive the lost traditional values of Africa. “The agenda for contemporary African philosophy should include the critical and reconstructive treatment of the oral tradition and the exploitation of the literary and scientific resources of the modern world in pursuit of a synthesis” (Graness and Kresse, 1997, p. 181). In this case, “African identities [will] become meaningful and politically contested within historically located debates and theories of race, nation, and culture” (Kanneh, 1998, p. 48). But who is best suited to deconstruct Western impositions on Africa and strive to search for African identity?

### **3.5.1 African Philosophers in Search of African Identity**

Plato suggests that a rule of philosopher kings is most important for the political system to rule in a better way (Murray, 1953). It seems Plato conceives the indisputable roles of philosophers and intellectuals for the betterment of a society. “Social revolution” that Nkrumah suggested must have

been revived by “an intellectual revolution, a revolution in which [African] thinking and philosophy are directed towards [Africans’] redemption” (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 78). African philosophy and Pan-Africanism are the best ways to make such revolution true, and to address the problems of the continent via recreating African ways and solutions to get back the lost identity.

African liberation from the impediments of globalization demands Africans interest in self-determination and an African human dignity. The commitment of Pan-Africanism in searching for African identity via African personality points to the commitment of African philosophers to a better Africa. The spirit of African unity relies on the roles of intellectuals, which is a road to the African capacity to resist the impacts of globalization. Nkrumah said, “Unity is the first prerequisite for destroying Neocolonialism” (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 253). It is through this alone that African personality will be meaningful to the international community. Thus, “Africa needs a new type of citizen, a dedicated, modest, honest, informed man” (“Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah,” nd, p. 2). Such an African, Nkrumah contends, is also “a man who submerges self in service to the nation and mankind, abhors greed and detests vanity, whose humility is his strength and whose integrity is his greatness” (ibid). Cesaire also wrote, “it is a new type of society we must create with the help of our brother slaves, a society rich with all productive power of modern times, warm with all the fraternity of olden days” (1972, p. 11).

### **3.5.2 African Political Philosophers in Uniting African Identity**

The 1960s saw that African nationalist-ideological philosophers and other committed Africans were upholding Pan-African activities. K. Nkrumah, J. Nyerere, N. Mandela, L. S. Senghor were some of the African political philosophers involved in liberating Africa from colonial intrusion. The emergence of the OAU brought African leaders the interest in resisting multidimensional impediments of colonialism and globalization. It seems a political commitment would result in the effort to resist the consequences of globalization. However, since the impacts and African

conditions are complex “it would be a futile exercise and an erroneous intellectual approach to perceiving, define, or discuss the African conditions in general, timeless, and spaceless terms void of specificities” (Kasongo, 2010, p. 62).

Consequently, leaders’ political intervention is important to make intellectuals’ effort effective. Nyerere said, “Africa will have to rely upon Africa: African Governments will have to formulate, and carry out policies of maximum national and collective self-reliance. If they do, they will develop; if they do not, Africa will be doomed” (quoted in Abegunrin, 2009, p. 196). Nkrumah adds “only Africa can fight for its identity” (“Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah,” nd, p. 2). In this struggle, Nkrumah did not reject the assistance and support of foreign friends, which is important to achieve Africa’s Renaissance.

The achievement of the Renaissance will be meaningful if the Africans can unite their identity to keep up traditional values that make up African personality. Abegunrin said, “A united and developed Africa, wedded to the basic values of the respect for life that constitutes the undercurrent of its traditional civilizations, will impress humanity with the joy and significance of life” (2009, p. 173). “An Africa united and prosperous, an Africa united and powerful” is an important factor in the issues of dialogue, solidarity, and peace of the whole of humanity (ibid). With this similar account, Nelson Mandela avows the commitment of each African country to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the basic tenets of good governance that the global system demands. Also, such commitment, according to Mandela, makes the dream of Africa’s rebirth in the new millennium achievable (cited in Abegunrin, 2009).

Despite the fact that the African Renaissance requires defending its traditional values and shared values such as human rights, I think, this would lead Africa to continue dependency relationship with its former colonizers. The diverse challenges that Africa faces is a result of the continuous reliance for assistance on Western technical assistance. Nevertheless, African states

should break the dependency relationship, according to Dudley (1984). “A break would require not only radical changes in the political and economic structures of these states but also attitudinal changes on the part of the élite - the bureaucratic-managerial and political élite, the military and the intelligentsia” (Dudley, 1984, p. 54). Classes of African political philosophers and political leaders have to be organized to question the “colonizing machines<sup>xxii</sup>” of the West. These classes have to handle more firmly the weapons of the struggle rooted in their traditional cultures. According to Thiong’o, African philosophers of these classes “have to speak the united language of struggle contained in each of their languages. They must discover their various tongues to sing the song: ‘A people united can never be defeated’” (1987, p. 2).

### **3.5.3 African Philosophers, the Future African Identity, and the African Renaissance**

The contemporary situation shows that the African people face various economic and social problems to which the commitment of united African philosophers is assumed to sort out the problems and tackle them (Chukwu, 2002). Chukwu argues that African philosophers of the 21st century need to focus on the evolution of philosophies that are socially, politically and economically viable to the African condition (ibid). Besides, science and technology of the West are vital to the African Renaissance. However, because science and technology are not enough for the Renaissance, Africans have lots of things to do with a commitment to revive African traditional values although there are lots of impediments that have overwhelmed Africa. As a result, the African psychological makeup, common socioeconomic and cultural visions need to be united in the sense of Africanness. The making of African identity in the sense of Africanness demands Africans’ effort to break the “the colonizing mission” of the West in Africa. A united engagement of the African people in such breaking will achieve the goal of maintaining African values that make Africa’s Renaissance true to which African philosophers are the primary actors.

In view of this, I claim the African Renaissance presupposes the spirit of being an African with African solutions. In fact, the African Renaissance is being ensured somehow by socioeconomic conditions. Yet, the Renaissance enlightened with globalization does not embrace the African traditional values that can cope with Western achievements. African philosophy is the doctrine that canonizes an African with African spirit to realize the Renaissance. The commitment to do with African ways and cope with Western success is the principle that African philosophy describes. The principle unites Africans to make African cultures and traditions integrated into identical psychological makeup and common destiny. “If Africa’s cultural heritage is to come to terms with the latter-day problems of modern nation states in a globally international community, then African social, political, and economic demands upon and priorities within that community also have to be enunciated and addressed” (Hallen, 2002, p.15).

In addition, the making of Africans’ future identity and achieving the Renaissance demand intermingling the achievements of Africa’s past and present. African philosophy, as has been discussed, facilitates this in the organization of the past, present, and future African articulations of thought and practices (Outlaw, 2004). Similarly, Mudimbe wrote, “the present and the future . . . will be determined by the conception that African intelligence forms of the African past” (1988, p. 206). The intelligence to inquire Africa’s past achievements determines the way to disclose contemporary and future African problems on which African philosophers have practical missions (Presbey, 2002 and Balogun, 2014). This mission, according to Balogun, is “socio-political in character and the task of African philosophers is to be committed to fulfilling their scholarly obligations to their societies” (2014, p. 63). Creating a tradition of thinking and discourse is the first task of African philosophers, according to him, to consider the interest and aspirations of the people (ibid). Besides the socio-political matters that affect Africans and dealing with economic issues is the other task of African philosophers. According to L. Keita argues that “economic

matters that affect the African life is also left to African philosophers” (quoted in Presbey, 2002, p. 283). Presbey remarks that the essential contributions of Western science and [African] philosophers’ involvement in the making of Africa a modern continent (ibid).

The contemporary African philosophers in such involvement are not expected to naively dig up and praise the African past attainments (Messay, 2004). Instead of doing so, according to Messay, “they should develop a critical approach to determine the relevance of the traditional philosophy for the modern world with the view of integrating those elements that support the effort of modernization” (ibid, p. 115). Based on this, African philosophy in search for African identity is a step to awakening the people to work on African Renaissance that embraces African traditional values. It is a doctrine that helps African philosophers, leaders, the AU, and the entire members of the continent about the idea of Africanness. This would enable them to resist global injustices and inequalities that globalization caused in their walks of lives.

A complete resistance to the impacts of globalization in the continent is impossible because Africa cannot be an island apart from it. Nonetheless, a commitment of African philosophers and the rest of the Africans is essential at least to keep up an African identity with its true parts. In addition, people in Africa aspire “men and women who are intellectually born again” (Ogutu, 2002, p. 4) for the renaissance of Africa. These men and women are assumed to emancipate Africa from Western cultural absorption and work with a commitment to cultural exchange of African values and thought. Such intellectually born again men and women are African citizens that the continent needs to have to challenge the impacts of globalization.

Moreover, Africa demands “a younger generation who appreciates the values contained in the indigenous knowledge that are capable of addressing the problem of societies with a degree of complexity” (Bekele, 2002, p. 210). The generation also needs to be aware of the “views which are called ‘traditional’ still play an important role in the lives of Africans” (Teffo and Roux, 1998,

p. 193). Such views, according to Teffo and Roux, “cannot be ignored because they also come into play when issues such as development, education, government, and legislation are discussed” (ibid).

### **3.6 African Union in 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An Enthusiasm of Challenging Globalization**

The intercultural approach, which I defend, suggests the role of the AU in the 21st century to keep up African traditions that can cope with the achievements of globalization. It is clear that the Union has the ambition to transform Africa and keeps the continent from foreign influences. “As a twenty-first-century organization, the AU hopes for a Renaissance that includes improvement in the wealth, health, education, prosperity, and democracy across its member states and closer cooperation among all the countries on the African continent” (Badejo, 2008, p. 9). The Union in this regard seems to strengthen itself to cope with the international community, yet, it is not strong enough in resisting impacts of globalization. The Union merely adheres to declarations made by Western states. It is not working in cooperation with its peoples rather than doing tasks given to it by the UN. This does not let Africans think independently on matters that affect their lives, and fix problems of the continent so as to use African solutions to tackle the problems.

It seems to me that the Union is disabled to achieve its objectives in its geography, for the Union merely admits Western experiences rather than discovering and recognizing African past experiences. “In order for the African Union to truly accomplish its objectives in the twenty-first century, it must look back to the past to forge ahead to the future, politically, economically, socially and culturally” (Abegunrin, 2009, p. 192). The look into the past helps the Union to challenge the existing global structures that marginalize the continent. Furthermore, it will be strong to conceptualize and defend African ideas of identity, culture, traditional values, African solutions and Ubuntu that cope with Western science and technology.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Conclusion**

Given that philosophy is embedded in every culture, it is important to unearth the sociocultural, political and economic problems of a given society. As the West and the East have their own philosophy, Africa has a unique philosophy which approaches to analyze the realities from African solutions. Problems of the continent that colonialism and globalization caused are points of departure of African philosophy, and it speculates and attempts to resolve the problems reasonably. Also, African philosophy tries to analyze the Western allegation of Universalism as a hegemonic product of the Western philosophy that threatens the traditional values of Africa. It articulates the contributions of traditional values and principles that can cope with the Western achievements. However, colonialism, slavery, and racism affected important traditional values of Africa through the “civilizing mission”, which helps the West to export its local values into Africa. The “mission”, nowadays is Westernization, which empowers the West to achieve its long-term plan of universalizing its local values.

African philosophy is important to react to Westernization which reflects Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization on Africa. Westernization that embraces Western science, culture, and philosophy threatens African traditional values that make up an African identity. In addition, the Africans’ conception of humanity, social justice, freedom, equality and Ubuntu that the global community requires are also being threatened by the hegemony. The integration of states via globalization could not be able to tackle such threats. Globalization is Westernization according to some scholars (Wallerstien, nd; Lawson, 2010; Chimakonam, 2014), and the assumption of the “superiority” of Western culture, science and philosophy hitherto remain dominant. This disables an African independent thinking and manipulating African solutions on matters that affect the lives of the African people.

The West still pronounces notions of aid, technical assistance, Western philosophy of education and a commitment to transition into the age of technology to which Africa continues expecting the West for its renaissance. This prolongs Western hegemony in Africa. Moreover, the ideas of individualism, capitalism, and liberalism likely carry out a threat to African culture, mind and the economy. Due to this, African traditional values are highly affected by the threat and are being replaced by alien values. It seems to me that the ongoing hegemony of the West via Westernization is recolonization of Africa without exaggerating. Scholars named this Neocolonialism, which is sound to me since the aforementioned colonizing machines were used by the West. So, the continuity of Western hegemony in Africa is the big issue of Africans calling upon responsible Africans who are empowered with African philosophy.

African philosophy that is rooted in African traditional culture shines a light on the ways to challenge Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization. Keeping African identity and heritages from Western influences is the central issue of African descents to which African philosophy is important. In so doing, African philosophy demands the responsibilities of Africans and helps them to address the problems of the continent that Western hegemony and globalization caused. The commitment to disclose African problems that the hegemony and globalization caused is the primary task of African philosophers. This suggests the search for African solutions instead of primarily accepting Western solutions without questioning and depending on them. Assuming an equal partnership between African values and Western values is important.

Africa, in other words, needs to utilize its own solutions at hand instead of being dependent completely on the solutions imported. I think, this is a step to Africanize important aspects of the continent that helps the African people to decolonize their mind from “Eurocentric languages” and practices. African problems require African ways to resist the destructive effects of Western

hegemony and globalization on African traditional values. This is to mean that, a mere acceptance and adoption of Western solutions and ideologies without inquiry is not the only means to achieve African ends. If Western imposition of its values and ideologies in Africa continues and Africa simply adopts them, the African ideas of humanity, freedom, equality, social justice will be replaced by Western ideas. In addition, the African political system, educational institutions, social integration and the virtue of humanity at large will fail. An Africanized political, social, cultural and educational system is the thirst of Africans that African philosophy dedicates to quench.

I think the quench of the thirst will be achieved if an Africanized quick move with the achievements of globalization is kept in mind. The issue is about to keep up important traditional values of the continent that can go hand in hand with Western science and technology. But, how? The commitment to challenge Western hegemony and the impacts of globalization should be the goal of African philosophy and its practitioners. So as to succeed in making the goal, questioning the political system of Africa should become the central issue of African political philosophers from all sides. I assume an African political system that allows political philosophers' involvement in policy and decision making enables the people of Africa to seek knowledge of themselves and the continent. African philosophy with regard to this is a discourse that instructs Africans to revive past achievements, explore the contemporary situations and discover the future conditions of the continent. Striving to challenge the ongoing domination of the West and the impacts of globalization on Africa should be the task of Africans. As globalization fastens the export of alien values into Africa, the need for ACR is an essential task.

ACR puts forward the Renaissance of the continent that should embrace important traditional values of the continent because Western achievements alone are not enough. African philosophy and its practitioners have pragmatic functions to put the reality of African Renaissance on the

ground, i.e. striving to make sure African identities flourish. The search for African identities, the making and keeping them up are not seen separately from the articulation of ideas, thoughts and the goals of African philosophy. The end of this is to ensure the true Renaissance of Africa, which is the contemporary demand of its people. Ogotu wrote:

The new perspective in the Third Millennium is African Renaissance. The society has every right to look to the men and women of genius at our universities to provide the theoretical framework. The men of genius are the Lovers of Wisdom, the philosophers, men and women of ideas and whose discourses revolve around thought and practice in African philosophy. Are we equipped to provide the frameworks? Are we aware that our past explains our present and predicts our future? The ball is squarely in our court. (2002, p. 10)

The ball is African philosophy that also shines a light on the tasks of African governments. The important thing to be considered is the commitment of African leaders to allow African intellectuals to take part in every issue that affects their people. If this is done, both intellectuals and leaders would be able to think independently about the situations in Africa, and assume African solutions to meet the situations like Nationalist-ideological philosophers did. On the other hand, African philosophers and intellectuals should challenge their governments to make them look at African solutions around them. This is to make African leaders capable of articulating African ideas and thoughts, which is the input to make an Africanized educational policy.

African philosophy of education is the foundation for the making of an Africanized educational policy, i.e. rooted in the invaluable traditional values of Africa. The commitment of African governments to work with African philosophers, intellectuals, the diasporas and education policy makers is a road to Africanize African descents capable of preserving their traditions. This is the same as creating African descents capable of working with African values that cope with the contributions of Western science and values. It is through this that African philosophy would be able to achieve its goal in challenging Western hegemony and the ongoing impacts of globalization. In other words, the future goal of the African philosophy of education must be

Africanization, which is a possible way to keep up African cultures, values, religions, ways of dressing and way of speaking African languages. The purpose is to resolve the contemporary problems of the continent and to reduce the impacts of alien values and practices to come to Africa via foreign tourists, scholarship, social media, and so on.

It follows from the foregoing suggestions that African philosophy raises the issue of intercultural approach towards the universality claim of the West and Africans' response to it. The intercultural approach is the attempt to make Western values, science and technology alternatives to address African problems, if impossible, to make them equal partners with Africa values in an African place. Since the African ideas of humanity, morality, and Ubuntu are important to the whole of humanity at large, intercultural approach helps us put to make philosophy practical and make its practitioners "to preserve in all our relationships the respect for the basic values that constitute a human world" (Fanon, 1967, p. xvii). In other words, intercultural philosophies are required to celebrate the roles of traditional values in realizing humanity and addressing problems that the international community faces. Therefore, intercultural approach (either dialogue or polylogue) is not only the defining element of philosophy, but also the essential part of humanity (Mungwini, 2015).

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Globalisation is the system by which all peoples, goods and services, information, etc. flow and the free involvement of socioeconomic, cultural and religious issues. Although this thesis aims at challenging its challenges on African socioeconomic, mental and cultural issues, benefits of globalization are confirmed for the renaissance of Africa (Mittelman, 2000; Workineh, 2009; Umezurike, 2009)

<sup>ii</sup> The concept of “others” for the purpose of this thesis describes the rest of the world or the non-Western world. Mostly, Western discourses on Africa and the rest invoke this term to indicate peoples of the South

<sup>iii</sup> False Universalism can be understood as the universalization attempt of the West that disrespects the traditional values of “others”. The attempt is going ahead in the name of universally shared values which only considers the so called “universal” and “superior” culture, science and superior human race. Therefore, Westernization is the newly proposed mission of the West to continue exporting its local values. To achieve this, globalization is used as a channel of disseminating “Eurocentric languages”, practices and ideologies.

<sup>iv</sup> Chimakonam (2015), posits interculturalism as an intercultural approach which is an inquiry into the Global Expansion of Thought (GET). The way he conceives interculturalism is considered in this thesis in order to show how African philosophy can be a lesson to the global community regarding a balanced understanding of Western achievements and traditional values of “others”.

<sup>v</sup> The true universal values are values that global citizens are entitled to by the virtue of humanity. They are also called the commonly shared values. However, the West needs to universalize its local values in the name of such universal values. Therefore, I think, the claim of Western universalism can be understood as “False Universalism”, for the claim does not consider the values of “others” such as traditional values of Africa.

<sup>vi</sup> The idea of the African Renaissance is the core issue in recent times although it is not a new notion. As a notion is seen as “a proposal to an effort to remove the sources of conflict, restore its self-esteem and turn it into a zone of economic prosperity, peace and Stability” (Louw, nd, p. 1). So, it is the notion of “the rebirth of the African continent”

<sup>vi</sup> Boko Haram is a terrorist, military and Islamist group found in Nigeria, in the continent of Africa. Its meaning is taken from Hausan language in Nigeria, meaning “Western education is forbidden” (Smith, 2014).

<sup>vii</sup> Africanness in other words can be understood as being African. It involves the sense of belongingness to the continent that make an African pride of African traditional values and globalization achievements.

<sup>viii</sup> Globalization is overwhelmingly understood as a logic of homogenization, the primary violence of which is the assimilation and extirpation of difference (Katz, 2000, p. 179).

<sup>x</sup> Various conceived, it is seen as the authentic African ethical concept, a way of life, an authentic mode of being African, an individual ideal, the appropriate public spirit, a definition of life itself and the preferred manner of conducting public and private business (Matolino, 2013, p. 197).

<sup>xi</sup> Golden rule of global ethics refers to the ethics or the situation that rule the actions of global citizens based on the idea that one should treat others as he/she demands others treat him\her.

<sup>xii</sup> Balogun argues the humanistic nature of African philosophy for the reason that it is not abstract and static as the Western philosophy is. Eneh Joseph also argues that African philosophy is human centered, and “such nature of philosophy is not unique to African philosophy” (cited in Balogun, 2014, p. 58).

<sup>xiii</sup> Based on ethical point of view, “Some value individualism above communitarianism and think we all ought to, while others value communitarianism above individualism and think we all ought to” (Lehrer, 2001, p.109). However, transcendental individualism in communitarian sense suggests the existence of an ideal individual who is separated from his communal members.

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<sup>xiv</sup> By Intercultural hermeneutics Udeani posits “Cultural diversity within the context of Globalization from an intercultural hermeneutical (African) perspective would, at the long run, mean a laying bare of African and non-African cultures, a laying out that implies an explanation not only to the outsiders but also to ourselves coupled with a translation from the African cultural into the non-African world and vice versa” (2007, p. 4).

<sup>xv</sup> Robert Mugabe, who made his speech at the African Union in the 26<sup>th</sup> summit in 2016 was speaking about the unjust practices of the UN, and was asking Ban Ki Moon about Africa to have a representative in the Security Council (Mugabe, R., 2016).

<sup>xvi</sup> The universality claim of Western science, culture and philosophy, in other sense is the unconditional conviction of the truthfulness and the justness (of the so called “superior” science, culture and philosophy).

<sup>xvii</sup> Afro-Western citizen is to mean an African whose spirit is deprived off. An African whose African personality is changed into Western spirit, who acts and lives in the way a Western individual lives is Afro-Western citizen.

<sup>xviii</sup> African nationalism is the notion that includes attempt to transform the identity of Africans based on all political actions and ideological elements to improve the status, the rights and position of Africans in the emerging society imposed by white intrusion and conquest. It is a kind of search for African identity based on Pan-African Nationalism.

<sup>xix</sup> An African sense of global citizenship in this case, is to mean that the sense that the African people feel as Africans and at the same time who are Africans for the humanness of others. In other words, making the global community aware of humanity and keeping up one’s identity is an African sense of global citizenship. Think globally and act locally is at the center of this.

<sup>xx</sup> ACR refers to the commitment of all Africans to rediscover the lost cultures of Africa and the proper stick at values that make an African identity.

<sup>xxi</sup> Western educational system, according to Bekele is termed as the “exogenous system”, which assumes the traditional African knowledge and values were not important in comparison with the modern Western education (Bekele, 2007, p. 122).

<sup>xxii</sup> Colonizing machines indicate the so called superior Western science, culture and technology including ideologies such as liberalism and capitalism. These all machines are manifestations of Neocolonialism and its impacts that globalization caused in Africa. The machines clarify Western socio-cultural, economic and political imperialism that marginalized Africa.

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