

A Philosophical Evaluation of the Concept of African Freedom

Godwin Okaneme

Department of Philosophy and Religions, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria
Email: godack76@yahoo.com

Received September 24th, 2012; revised October 25th, 2012; accepted November 9th, 2012

Freedom is a key concept in universal affairs. It is so important in human affairs that individuals, countries and even continents cannot do without it. The term freedom is highly subjective as its meaning may differ from one individual to another. It equally applies to countries and continents. This factor however does not in any way reduce the philosophical importance of the concept of freedom and its critical role in human affairs. This work evaluates the concept of African freedom based on Maduabuchi Dukor's incisive work on African freedom titled "African freedom: The freedom of philosophy". The paper takes the strong but painful position that Africa is not really free and gives reasons for this unfortunate scenario. It further discusses the way out of the continent's quagmire.

Keywords: Evaluation; Concept; Freedom; African; Predicament

Introduction

A discussion on the concept of African freedom will definitely elicit some unbridled curiosity, as well as enthusiasm. There is no doubt about this philosophical standpoint because Africa represents so many things to so many people depending on one's ideological perspective. To the unrepentant colonizer (the West), Africa is a continent baptized with progressive underdevelopment making no visible efforts to extricate herself from the shackles of backwardness and idiosyncrasies. To the concerned citizens of the world, Africa is a continent that has received a lot of cruelty particularly from Europe and the rest of the developed world as a result of the deliberate activities arising from colonialism and its pernicious effects as well as neo-colonialism.

For the African, the issues are even more hydra-headed and problematic. While many Africans are quick and eager to heap their problems and predicaments on the altar of colonialism, many others yet reject this pessimistic viewpoint and are of the strong opinion that African countries should stop blaming their lack of development on colonialism and seek for positive ways of moving their nations forward. In light of the fore-going, this paper critically examines and evaluates the concept of African freedom. While it does not totally rule out the factor of colonialism as a strong force and contributor to African backwardness and inherent lack of total freedom, it is of the considered opinion that the issue of colonialism as a key factor and contributor to African underdevelopment and lack of freedom has been overtly and covertly over-flogged and that it is time that Africans start looking inwards and work assiduously towards the development of the continent as well as working towards its total freedom. This has become more imperative since no nation or continent develops through protests and bemoaning past injustices meted to it.

Philosophy: An Overview

The mere mention of the word philosophy elicits some measures of anxiety as well as curiosity among people espe-

cially non-philosophers. Even among intellectuals, the subject matter of philosophy is a subject of controversy. According to Barbet (1990: p. 1):

The question "what is philosophy?" unlike the apparently similar questions "what is history?" and "what is science?" does not admit of a straight forward answer. Indeed it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say, paradoxically that the question is itself a philosophical one-in so far as different philosophers tend to have different conceptions as to the nature of their chosen discipline. Perhaps the best way of finding out what the various answers are is to plunge straight in and "do" philosophy...

Abel (2004: p. 1) seems to echo the same opinion as Barbet when he asserted:

That the ancient Greek thinkers who explored fundamental questions about the world and about human existence called themselves philosophers "lovers of wisdom". They took time to stop and wonder about such things as the nature of the universe, the purpose of life and the meaning of "good" and "bad" in their search for wisdom, they were not content to rely on answers provided by religious and cultural tradition; they used reason and evidence gained from their own experience to formulate new hypotheses. Although not all the Greek philosophers thought it possible to find the ultimate answers to their questions, they all believed that the very activity of seeking wisdom is highly worthwhile.

According to Onigbinde (2009: p. 1):

Most people probably have never bothered to know how philosophy can, and does touch their lives. Some simple examples may help show some connections between philosophy and human life. When someone in anger, blames the world for his misfortunes, he states unconsciously, basic belief. When someone declares his love of life, in some joyous moments, he too expresses a view of the

world in general. Of course, statements like these need not be final as they might later be modified or totally abandoned.

The essence or importance of philosophy to humanity cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed philosophy is of so much essence in the world. Without ideas which are the hallmark of philosophy, the world may not move forward or make meaningful or tangible progress. In the words of Okeke (2001: p. 10) "*philosophy is considered an indispensable knowledge in all human endeavours and in the human society*". Philosophy is indeed a rational enterprise and is a very important discipline in the world. The reasons for this stand are not far-fetched. In our world of today filled with mysteries and confusions, there is every need for us to ask questions. This is emphatically where the role of the philosopher comes to the fore. This is where the views of Immanuel Kant, a very notable German philosopher are apt. According to Kant, philosophy asks four basic questions, "*what can I know?*", "*What ought I to do?*" "*What can I hope for?*" and "*what is man?*" Without reason, man could be said to be an empty being devoid of rationality and may not make rational and positive contributions towards the betterment of his immediate environment. Indeed it is rationality that places man above other beings in the world and it is through his rationality, that man transforms his environment and surrounding from what it is to what it ought to be. Philosophy indeed provides man with the necessary intellectual capacity to make necessary and contingent contributions towards the betterment of his society. It indeed equips him to have a guided outlook on life by examining issues more critically and rationally which enables him to have a proper focus thus helping him to make positive contributions to issues that confront him and others in their daily lives.

It must be noted here that it is not being advocated that philosophy has solutions to all human problems. Indeed that will be a serious misconception for neither philosophy nor any other course of study for that matter has all solutions to numerous human challenges. Problems are indeed part and parcel of human existence and a world without problems is indeed inconceivable. Problems indeed help to expose the intellectual character of man for it is in discovering problems that confront his daily existence and finding enduring solutions to them on regular basis that his intellectual capacity as a thinking being is exposed and appreciated.

Freedom: What Is It?

Freedom as a concept has assumed an enviable and important position in man's social and political life that it features daily in man's frequent and arduous task of asserting himself in the world. Among countries and continents of the world, freedom is severally talked about consciously or unconsciously, knowingly or unknowingly covertly or overtly. According to the New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language (2004: p. 503), *freedom means exemption or liberation from slavery or imprisonment*. It further defines it as *exemption from political restraint or autocratic control*. Freedom stands for something greater than just the right to act justly within the confines of the law. It also stands for securing to everyone an equal opportunity for life, liberty and the total and unrestricted pursuit of happiness all through one's life. In the words of Dukor (2010: p. 1), "*The concept of freedom itself is a*

nebulous concept. It has often been discussed and written about as an abstract concept and in some other contexts; it is viewed as a socio-political praxis". Okolo (1988: p. 254) views freedom as very cogent issue in human affairs. According to him:

Freedom is not easy to define even though it has always been a prime value among men and constitutes a watchword among revolutionaries all over the world. There is perhaps no other political idea with as much import in practical action.

Ramose (2011: p. 1) views freedom from an ontological perspective. According to him:

Freedom is coeval with human existence. Freedom was a lived human experience long before wise words were spoken about it or erudite treatises written on it. Freedom was known wherever human beings lived. Freedom is not, in the first place, a hollow abstract concept subsisting in the metaphysical world of Platonic ideas. If it were such a concept then it would be separated from the human being, waiting to be seized and grasped by whoever cared to travel the metaphysical world of Plato's ideas. For us, freedom is rooted in the ontology of an embodied human being. It is the concrete lived reality of the human being, in a complex web of relationships, to stay alive in the unfolding and incessantly changing conditions of life.

In the words of Adler (1968: p. 5), "*it (freedom) has been the battle cry of revolutionists and counter-revolutionists, of reformers and anarchists, of utopists and men who fear all forums of enthusiasm*". Hannah Arendt (1977: p. 153) equates freedom with the human condition for according to her, "*as long as they act, neither before nor after, for to be free and to act are the same*".

What therefore in essence is freedom? According to Jean-Paul Sartre, a notable French Existentialist philosopher, "*freedom is what you do with what has been done to you*". This could be termed a faulty definition of the true concept of freedom since it reduces or limits the exercise of freedom to a reactionary concept instead of making it a proactive issue. For another French philosopher, Charles De Montesquieu, a great political thinker, "*freedom is the right to do what the law permits*". The above definition provides us with a rational perception of what freedom truly is. A society that is free is that whose individuals have the unfettered power to take their destiny in their hands and who are ready to chart their own course without recourse to external interference or being teleguided directly or indirectly from outside their environment. Such a society could be a self defined and self-driven one owing no allegiance whatsoever to any foreign power or domination. Again, a society that could be said to be free is one that has the rule of law at its beck and call. Freedom also implies that the citizens of a given state live most responsibly within the confines of the law. It is the right conduct of citizens in a state that can guarantee law and order in that state. It is a clear fact that the degree of freedom that is available to citizens in any given state is a function of the degree of responsibility demonstrated by the citizens of that state for one cannot hope for a free state where citizens conduct their affairs outside the norms of their society. Such a situation could only lead to lawlessness and anarchy.

One's freedom must not infringe on the freedom of another

citizen for the freedom of a citizen begins where that of another stops. It is therefore of utmost importance that citizens respect the freedom of their fellow citizens for there to be peace and harmony and an egalitarian society. This implies that citizens must conduct their affairs with utmost decorum and avoid unnecessary frictions capable of leading to a breakdown of law and order. This will also mean that citizens make certain sacrifices to ensure that there is peace and harmony in the state.

African Conception of Freedom: An Appraisal

The way Africans conceive freedom is very unique and quite different from the way it is seen in the West. Africans conceive freedom from a communalistic perspective while the Europeans conceive it from the individualistic realm or perspective. According to Dukor (2010: p. 3):

No less important is the African Traditional conception of freedom and its implication for African freedom from European domination. There is African conception of freedom extant in the underlying principle of African political philosophy called communalism and in a popular conception of individual personal gods among the Africans. Analytically speaking therefore, African conception of freedom can be traced to a realm of ideas bordering on African communalistic ideology and her conception of personal god. African man is understood and explained in terms of his integration in a network of relationships in the society among the individuals and their relationship to the past, present and future generations.

African freedom is deeply enshrined in our communalist endeavors. African communities are strongly fashioned from a typical communal perspective. The well-being and prosperity of the community is of utmost importance to the individual in the African context and in most cases, the individual subjugate his comfort to the comfort of the community. This is embarked upon on the assumption that if the community is comfortable, then the citizens of that community must be comfortable as well. This is usually a natural flow. When there is turmoil in the community, the peace of the citizens of that community is compromised. Dukor (2010: p. 4) seem to have captured this point vividly when he wrote:

In other words, freedom in Africa means harmonizing one's actions (political and social) with the society's norms and values which of course means that there is never an absolute freedom from an African point of view.

In summary, African conception of freedom differs remarkably from the Western conception of freedom. While the African conception of freedom views freedom from a total communalistic perspective, the Western conception of freedom views freedom purely from an individualistic perspective. In this sense, the individual does not subject his freedom to the state but obeys the laws of the state willingly as a law-abiding citizen. This is a marked departure from the African perception of freedom that sees freedom from a communalistic point of view.

Is Africa Really Free?

This is indeed a critical and challenging question that will elicit a lot of comments from various sides of the divide. This will surely depend on the perspective from which any scholar

or thinker sees it. Whenever this very critical question is raised, many African patriots and scholars are quick to answer in the affirmative. While such patriots and scholars need to be commended for their unalloyed patriotism, the truth that stares us in the face is that Africa as a continent is not completely and totally free. Africa we are told from the historical perspective is the cradle of world civilization. Unfortunately for the continent of Africa, things have gone so awry that despite her numerous natural and human resources, she has continued to struggle to find her feet among other continents of the world in social, economic and political issues. Poverty remains an endemic challenge in the continent and many countries in Africa are so poor and lean heavily on grants and aids from Western nations for survival. This surely cannot be a sign of freedom at all at least from a critical and objective perspective.

Evaluation of Africa's Predicaments

The African continent of today is enmeshed in tumultuous crises of incredible dimensions. Okolo (2003: p. 3) asserts that:

Africa is not only the home of the black people but their home-base as well, in the sense that in actual fact, the continent contains the heaviest concentration of black people in the world. Consequently to speak about the African condition, the powerlessness or the impotence of the black man in Africa in a strong way speaks on the reason or reasons for the powerlessness, exploited and exploitable conditions of the blacks in Diaspora too.

Oladipo (2007: p. 147) seemingly agrees with the above view when he asserts that:

Africa today is confronted with an enormous developmental challenge which is composed of a myriad of interlocking elements. In the first place, she has not been able to reconstruct her societies in a manner that can empower her peoples to realize their human potentials in a significant manner. Secondly, she has failed to achieve the kind of cultural rebirth that can ensure that her encounters with other cultures are mutually enriching rather than socially destabilizing. In other words, Africa today is not only confronted with the problem of dwindling opportunities for social development and self-fulfillment, she is also faced with a serious problem of cultural dislocation involving a loss of capacity for deliberate, self-initiated change. In general, she has fallen behind in the developmental process. Hence, the socio-cultural situation in Africa today is largely one of risk—particularly the risk of humiliation and poverty as a result of continuous underdevelopment and social decay—and anxiety about the possibility of the continent ever being able to evolve an industrial civilization, which would enable her to achieve economic prosperity for her peoples and ensure that her encounters with other societies are ones of genuine partnership rather than of dependence and exploitation.

One of the greatest predicaments of the African continent is the issue of slavery. Prior to the independence of most African countries, many Africans were forcefully bundled into Europe and America through the inhuman slave trade. They were used for slave labour in farms and were subjected to inhuman treatments and were equally forced to work for very long hours without food and water in some cases. Needless to recount that

Africa lost a lot of her citizens to slavery. The question that will arise here is: What is the effect of the slave trade on the present African predicament? It will amount to belabouring the obvious to state that slavery and slave trade impacted and has continued to impact negatively on Africa as a continent. Through the obnoxious and inhuman trade, Africa lost a lot of her citizens to Europe and America and many of them died in the process of being ferried across in most inhuman conditions while those who could not withstand the harsh weather and unbearable conditions simply gave up the ghost while on the journey to the Whiteman's land. Perhaps, it will not be out of place to assert that if there was no slave trade and slavery, our brothers that were forcefully taken into Europe and America would have stayed back to contribute their own quota towards the development of the continent of Africa. Africa could have been better off. Perhaps this is where the proponents of the payment of reparation to Africa by Europe and America have a very strong case. However, it must be stated clearly that even if no monetary payment is made to the nations of Africa as fallout of the obnoxious and inhuman slave trade, Africa at least deserves an unreserved apology from both Europe and America for forcefully taking her citizens into slavery which is morally reprehensible and psychologically dehumanizing. No amount of postulations or arguments can fault this position as it is an existential truism for all times.

Closely related to the concept of slavery is the problem of colonialism in Africa. Many nations of Africa were forcefully colonized by Western nations and the effects of such forceful colonization are very visible in every nook and cranny of the continent even up till today.

Oraegbunam (2006: p. 228) sums it up thus:

Western colonialism is certainly an important event in Africa's history. Although ended some decades ago, colonialism inaugurated a crisis of the post-colonial African identity. Every colonial project involves a contact between two cultures in which one establishes a control and applies pressure over the other with the effect that the former seeks to change in some degree the way of life of the latter. But because culture is the totality of a people's way of life, the enormous impact of colonialism which consists in "directed change" cannot be over emphasized. It normally results in a conflict of cultures and identity crisis.

There is no gainsaying the fact that colonialism surely contributed a lot to the underdevelopment of the African continent as many nations of the continent were economically despoiled through it. It is worthy of note that many nations of Africa are still suffering the effects of colonialism many years after they had achieved political independence from their colonial masters.

Closely related to colonialism is the concept of neo-colonialism. As the name critically and logically implies, neo-colonialism is a new form of colonialism in Africa. Neo-colonialism can be defined as the continuation of the economic model of colonialism after a colonized territory has achieved formal political independence from its colonial master. This concept has mostly been applied commonly to Africa especially since the twentieth century till date. Even after most African countries have achieved political independence from their colonial masters, these colonial masters still held these countries in bondage by strangulating them economically. Before the extraction of

mineral resources in some of these countries came on board, the economies of these countries were heavily dependent on agriculture. These agricultural products were expropriated and exported to the sole benefit of the colonial masters to the great disadvantage of those African countries that produced them. Till today, the Western nations have held the nations of Africa in bondage through the obnoxious and repressive economic policies of the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) and the World Bank.

Another angle to the issue of neo-colonialism is the issue of foreign aid to African countries. These aids come mainly from Western nations and America. The inability of most African nations to grow their economics after independence as a result of the deliberate economic blockades from these colonial masters made it inevitable for these helpless African nations to seek foreign aids willy-nilly. Accepting these loans from Western nations and America by these African nations made them economically sterile as their economies gradually crumbled. Most of these loans were given out at very high interest rates purposely to cripple these young African nations economically. The repayment of these loans has contributed significantly to the dwindling of the economies of most African nations today. Worthy of note is the striking fact that some of these African nations never requested for these loans but were convinced or cajoled into taking them to their own great disadvantage. Another critical issue is the fact that some criminally-minded and corrupt heads of state in Africa collected these loans on behalf of their countries and never utilized them for any meaningful developmental purposes. Rather, they embezzled these loans and ironically stashed them away in foreign banks in Europe and America to the great advantage of these foreign nations and to the great disadvantage of their impoverished nations. Sadly, this trend has become a recurring decimal even up till today in most African countries.

Apart from the issue of taking foreign loans by African nations, another serious aspect of neo-colonialism is brain drain. Many highly qualified and intellectually advanced man-power in Africa today are tempted to take up jobs in Europe and America. The temptation comes in the form of wonderful social security's and irresistible and mouth-watering salaries. As a result of poor economies that has become the sad lot of so many African nations today; many African nations cannot maintain their highly qualified work force. They therefore end up migrating to Europe and America where they get better job offers with favourable working conditions. Many of them never come back and their nations become the ultimate losers. It is sad to recall that many highly qualified African engineers, medical doctors, nurses, lawyers and teachers have taken employment in developed nations of Europe and America to the detriment of their home nations. As a result of this unfortunate saga, African nations suffer till today the negative effects of brain drain with Western nations being the ultimate gainers.

Perhaps one of the greatest and most visible impediments to African freedom and development today is the perennial loss of cultural identity among the different nations that make up the continent. Commenting on the full import of this anomaly, Wiredu (1995: p. 33) asserts that:

Contemporary African experience is marked by a certain intellectual anomaly. The African today, as a rule, lives in a cultural flux characterized by a confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and a foreign cul-

tural legacy of a colonial origin. Implicated at the deepest reaches of this cultural amalgam is the superimposition of Western conceptions of the good upon African thought and conduct. The issues involved here are of the utmost existential urgency; for it may well be that many of the instabilities of contemporary African society are traceable to this circumstance.

Culture according to Anigbo (1988: p. 25) entails:

All the qualities which group men together and distinguish them from the rest of the animal kingdom. The most basic aspect of that is the capability of man to communicate and receive back information from one another. This can be within and through all human groups.

For Kroeber (1963: p. 132):

The cultures of the world, past and present form an interconnected continuum, and it is somewhat arbitrary to dichotomize this continuum on the one specific issue of whether peculiar cultures do or do not have writing and to call them civilized or uncivilized accordingly.

It would not be out of place to assert that Africa as a continent has suffered from loss of cultural identity as a result of the contact some of her citizens have had with Europeans. Many Africans for instance will prefer bearing foreign names than answering their indigenous names which will portray fully their identity. It is therefore not surprising today that many Africans can no longer be recognized by the names they bear. The same applies also to the food we eat. Many Africans these days will prefer eating foreign foods rather than eat their local delicacies. It is equally noticeable in how we dress. We abhor our local wears that portray our rich cultural heritage in order to dress like Europeans, irrespective of whether such clothes suit our climatic conditions or not.

It must be stressed though sadly, that Africa has been largely affected by the virus of ignorance and poverty ravaging the entire continent today. Many African children who are of school age are out of school due to the obvious fact that their parents cannot afford to pay school fees for them and also buy their books to keep them in school. Such children are thus left behind in a world that is highly knowledge driven and dynamic in character as well. This surely accounts for the reason why crime is on the increase in all the nooks and crannies of the continent without any visible hope of mitigation.

One of the most dangerous trends in Africa today is the political crises that are ravaging some African countries. Some African countries like Mali, Somalia, Ethiopia, Algeria, Libya, Ivory Coast and Sudan have undergone one type of crisis or the other. Some of these crises in some cases are fomented and sustained from outside the continent mainly for political and economic reasons. Such crises have continued to impact very negatively on the continent's corporate image.

Redressing the African Condition

It is an agreed existential truism that the African condition is that filled with fear, despair, hopelessness and retrogression. It is a condition of purposelessness, cluelessness and visionless political leadership that has spread like wildfire in many countries that make up the continent. As a result of selfish and self-seeking political leadership in many countries of Africa,

military intervention have become a common feature in many African countries despite the fact that democracy has been widely accepted as the most popular form of government in many countries of the world today.

If Africa must develop and take her place among other continents of the world, then there is the dire and compelling need to redress squarely the pitiable and dehumanizing conditions prevalent in most countries in the continent. Many scholars of African descent have expressed their views on this. According to Okolo (1993: p. 1):

If the African is to win his current battle for progress and development or hopes to overcome his psychological, social and political predicament, he must, it seems to me, equip himself with genuine self-knowledge and self-understanding. It must however be said of him that perhaps no race or cultural group in modern times has taken the Delphic injunction, "know thyself", more seriously than the African.

One of the greatest challenges of the African continent that needs to be redressed is the issue of underdevelopment prevalent in all nooks and crannies of the continent. According to Terfa (2006: p. 175).

Development in Africa has been growing at a very slow pace. There are many factors responsible for this kind of regression or stagnation. These are; the colonial legacy, social pluralism and its centrifugal tendencies, the corruption of leaders, poor labour discipline, lack of entrepreneurial management, inappropriate policies, the stifling of market mechanisms, low level of technical assistance, the limited inflow of foreign capital, falling commodity prices and unfavourable terms of trade and low level of saving and investment.

For Otonti Nduka (2006: p. 4):

The quest for development is, on the other hand, the totality of the concerted efforts made by individual societies to overcome weakness by acquiring increasing control over the forces of nature thereby progressively eliminating the centuries-old scourges of poverty, ignorance and disease and making life on earth more worth living. This quest is both perennial and universal.

Perhaps, it will not be out of place to assert that for Africa to develop as a continent and be able to catch up with the rest of the continents of the world, education of her citizens must be pursued aggressively and vigorously. The type of education being advocated here is that which has a pragmatic approach that can equip African youths with the knowledge and self-confidence to move the continent forward. Again, the issue of diseases ravaging the entire length and breadth of the continent must be addressed. It is highly unacceptable that in this age of scientific and technological development, common ailments like malaria and wild polio virus still ravage the continent.

One of the greatest problems plaguing the African continent is the poverty of political leadership. Commenting on this, Dukor (2003: p. 22) says:

African people are stuck in their quest to wholly democratize. The much-sought social, political and economic transformation is recurrently elusive. The military leadership across the length and breadth of the Blackman's land

holds the democratic testing of the people to ransom. However, African revolution is an ideal proclaimed by African leaders at the very beginning of the waves of independence. But today, it is obvious from the economic hardships and political instability pervading the Black-man's land that a truly African revolution is being waited in vain as there exist gaps between rhetoric and reality in the even much bandied path to economic and political reconstruction.

It will be worthwhile to state that no other continent in the world have suffered more from poor political leadership than Africa. This unfortunate and sad reality is captured by Dukor (2006: p. 215) when he stated that:

Developing countries of Africa are still battling with the problem of governance which results to political instability, unaccountability, embezzlement, graft, etc in business and social life. Corporate citizenship role in this scenario is developing personalities in the industries, organizations and governments who are patriotically and culturally capable of injecting ideas and integrity in governance.

Closely related to the problem of poor political leadership in the African continent is the problem of endemic political corruption prevalent among many countries in Africa. There is no gainsaying the fact that political corruption is one of the greatest challenges of political leadership in the continent and it has impacted very negatively on many countries in Africa leading to progressive underdevelopment in the continent. If Africa will be free, the issue of corruption especially among the political class which tends to consciously under develop the continent must be addressed. Political leaders in Africa must be taught afresh the gains of altruism and selflessness in political leadership as opposed to the current graft mentality that is prevalent among the political class in most countries of the continent now.

The issue of incessant and unbridled quest for materialistic acquisition of wealth is another major challenge that must be addressed for Africa to move forward. Okolo (1994: p. 10) throws more light on this issue when he asserts that:

For more enlightenment on the nature of consumer society, one dominated by acquisitive instinct, we briefly point to its major characteristics. The first is unproductive spending. Wealth exhibitionism is usually the name of the game. Social importance, prestige and power are usually conceived in terms of material wealth and possessions. Purchasing instincts practically dominate individual lives.

Speaking further on this, Okolo (1993: p. 33) asserts that:

Materialistic values and aspirations are so fleeting, often disappointing. They ultimately fail to satisfy man whose nature clamours for higher, more lasting values. Quality, not quantity of life is what truly enriches and satisfies man.

African political leaders must teach the masses the need for cultivating higher values of selflessness and service to humanity as opposed to the negative value of primitive acquisition of wealth. However, since it is always said that example is better than precepts, it is expected that African political leaders should lead by example by living moderate lives visible to all and sundry to enable the masses follow their examples. It will be hopeless for our political leaders to preach that the citizens

should adopt moderate live-styles while they (the political leaders) live very horrible and ostentatious lives.

Conclusion

The African continent has been bedeviled by challenges of various magnitudes. This is a very glaring fact that is alluded to by various African scholars like Uroh (2007: p. 52), Bamikole (2007: p. 23), Offor (2006: p. 120), Oladipo (2006: p. 59) and Lauer (2007: p. 121). While it is agreed that Africa as a continent has suffered so much in the hands of her various colonial masters, it has no reason to continue blaming others for her misfortunes many years after achieving political independence. It is time for Africa to take positive and practical steps forward. The political leaders of the various nations that make up the continent of Africa should provide positive, effective, effectual transparent and pragmatic political leadership devoid of selfishness and self-serving motives and objectives. This will certainly be the first practical step towards the real development of the continent.

It will also be worthwhile to state that the various nations of Africa should strive for economic freedom. This they can achieve by shifting emphasis from consumption to production which will help to boost their economies and also conserve their scarce resources. Citizens of Africa, especially those who are exceptionally gifted should be patriotic enough to stay back in their various countries and contribute their own quota towards the development of their nations instead of migrating to Europe and America in search of greener pastures at the slight opportunity. It is sad to recall that some of the best doctors, nurses, engineers, lawyers and even teachers from Africa are found in Europe and America. Africans in Diaspora have contributed immensely towards the development of their host nations. It will not be out of place to ask such illustrious and exceptionally endowed citizens of Africa to come home and help develop their home lands.

Though it has been reiterated time and again that Africa is not totally free, it is the longing and yearning of all true citizens of Africa that the continent become truly free and exhibit real qualities and characteristics of a truly free people. It is sad and frustrating to live in a continent where most people are so dispirited, disenchanting, disoriented and hopeless. For such people, living means not dying for there is little or nothing to hope for. This surely is a sign of a continent not yet truly liberated from the shackles of bondage, slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The greatest freedom that will accrue to Africa is the freedom to define ourselves, our possibilities and our limitations and the opportunity to assert ourselves as key players and contributors to the global community. Since no nation or continent obtains freedom on a platter of gold, Africa should not expect to achieve true freedom without a fight. It may not necessarily be a physical combat but an ideological one where the African is expected to assert his humanity and raise his head high among the rest of the free people of the universe. It is when and only when this is achieved that it can be said with all certainty that Africa has become truly free. We eagerly wait for this time to come.

REFERENCES

Abel, D. (2004). *Fifty readings in philosophy*. New York: McGraw-Hill

- Companies.
- Anigbo, O. A. C. (1988). Multiculturalism: The Nigerian experience. In I. T. K. Egonu (Ed.), *African perspectives in world culture* (p. 25). Owerri: Vivians and Vivians Publisher.
- Bankole, L. O. (2007). Culture and development in Africa. In T. Ebijuwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and social change* (p. 23). Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd.
- Barbet, A. H. (1990). *Mastering philosophy*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Dukor, M. (2003). The military and African revolution. In M. Dukor (Ed.), *Philosophy and politics. Discourse on values, politics and power in Africa*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Dukor, M. (2006). Problem of corporate citizenship in Africa. In I. Odimegwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and Africa* (p. 215). Amawbia: Lumos Nig Ltd.
- Dukor, M. (2010). *African freedom: The freedom of philosophy*. Verlag: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Egonu, I. T. K. (1988). *African perspectives in world culture*. Owerri: Vivians and Vivians Publishers.
- Hannah, A. (1977). *Between past and future*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Kroeber, A. L. (1963). *An anthropologist looks at history*. California: University of California Press.
- Lauer, H. (2007). The modern scientific tradition and its contribution to economic regression in Africa. In T. Ebijuwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and social change* (p. 121). Ibadan: Hope Publication Ltd.
- Mortima, J. A. (1968). *Freedom*. New York: Magic Books.
- Nduka, O. (2006). *The roots of African underdevelopment and other essays*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Offor, F. (2006). Democracy as an issue in African philosophy. In O. Oladipo (Ed.), *Core issues in African philosophy* (p. 120). Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd.
- Okeke, C. (2001). *Introduction to social philosophy*. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.
- Okolo C. B. (2003). The African condition. In M. Dukor (Ed.), *Philosophy and politics: Discourse on values, politics and power in Africa* (p. 3). Lagos Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Okolo, C. B. (1988). The modern African and the quest for freedom. In I. T. K. Egonu (Ed.), *African perspectives in world culture* (p. 254). Owerri: Vivians and Vivians Publishers.
- Okolo, C. B. (1993a). *Education and Nigerian values*. Enugu: Cecta (Nig) Limited.
- Okolo, C. B. (1993b). *What is to be African? Essay on African identity*. Enugu: Cecta (NIG.) Ltd.
- Okolo, C. B. (1994). *Squandermania mentality: Reflections on Nigerian culture*. Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Oladipo, O. (2006). The issue of African self-definition in the contemporary world. In O. Oladipo (Ed.), *Core issues in African philosophy* (p. 147). Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd.
- Oladipo, O. (2007). The notions of community and democracy in contemporary African social and political thought. In T. Ebijuwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and social change* (p. 59). Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd.
- Onigbide, A. (2009). *What is philosophy?* Ibadan: Frontline Resources Ltd.
- Oraegbunam, I. (2006). Western colonialism and African identity crises: The role of African philosophy. In I. Odimegwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and Africa* (p. 228). Amawbia: Lumos Nig. Ltd.
- Ramose, M. B. (2011). *Freedom as a philosophical project in contemporary Africa. A Paper Presented at the 2011 World Philosophy Day Conference Held at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*.
- Terfa, A. K. (2006). Philosophy and human situation: Issues of development in Africa. In I. Odimegwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and Africa* (p. 175). Amawbia: Lumos Nig. Ltd.
- The new international Webster'S comprehensive dictionary of the English language* (2004). Florida: Trident Press International.
- Uroh, C. O. (2007). Mediating plural identities in Africa. In T. Ebijuwu (Ed.), *Philosophy and social change* (p. 52). Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd.
- Wiredu, K. (1995). *Conceptual decolonization in African philosophy: Four essays* (Selected and Introduced by Olusegun Oladipo). Ibadan: Hope Publication Ltd.