

**INTERROGATING HEGELIAN DIALECTICS ON AFRICA AND AFRICAN
JURISPRUDENCE WITHIN PECULIARITIES OF SOCIO-POLITICAL
CHALLENGES OF THE C21ST: THE HARD TRUTH**

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ABSTRACT

Hegelian philosophy on Africa and African Jurisprudence has been in the eye of the storm for as long as its life-span, with critics arising mostly from Africa and foreign scholars with sympathetic disposition towards whatever Africa represents. By doctrinal approach, this paper found that some of Hegel’s dialectics deny rationality to Africans, implying inferior racial, religious, moral and jurisprudential considerations thus negating objective judgment. The paper however reasoned that toeing such conventional trend without assessing how attitude of Africans themselves tend towards justifying Hegelian position is a negation of balanced philosophical reasoning. The paper thus recommended the need for African leaders and philosophers to look beyond the otiose claim of “how Europe underdeveloped Africa” for an inward looking disposition that would wriggle Africa out of the grip of vices that have bound the Continent to her past, for proper placement in contemporary historical and jurisprudential evolutionary epoch.

Key Words: Interrogation, Hegelian Dialectics, African Jurisprudence, Social Challenges; and Hard Truth.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hegelian treatise on Africa by his work on *The Philosophy of History*, no doubt, came to the West as a welcome guide on implication of daring into the heartland of Africa for whatever purpose. It came as an expression of the West on Africa, derived from records of explorers, traders and missionaries as first foreign contact with the Continent.¹ Hegel detailed on how Africa was a “girdle of snakes of all kinds” with poisonous disposition to Europeans, without historical part in the world movement towards development; a land where “consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence”; a Negro land where “parents sell their children and conversely, children sell their parents as either has the opportunity”; an unhistorical land with undeveloped spirit, basking in the State of mere nature, devoid of morality, religion, organized philosophy of law and political Constitution, thus justifying Europe’s enslavement and colonization of Africa.²

However, as African scholars and those with sympathetic disposition to the plight of Africa arose from their slumber, several of them challenged the veracity of Hegel’s narratives

G.W.F Hegel, ‘Philosophy of History’ <fordbibliographies.com/view/...> accessed on 16-08-2021¹

W.H. Walsh, ‘Hegel on History of Philosophy’ <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2504119>>;²

<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2504119>> accessed on 16-08-2021

and conclusions, arguing that his interpretation of Africa's place in world history and her philosophy of law was not only a gross misrepresentation but that his denial of rationality to Africans was racist and must be rejected because, as they argue, it glossed over Africa's contribution to civilization, including jurisprudence, moral and religious values that should give leadership to the world, in all ramifications.³

By doctrinal approach, this paper re-examines Hegelian dialectics to unveil the *demon* interpreted into it by various scholars, with a view to determining where the plight of African Continent lies, especially within the framework of social, political and economic challenges of the twenty first century.

Conceptual Clarification

For the avoidance of doubt, some of the concepts used in this paper are clarified, to put their use in proper perspective. To avoid verbosity however, only Hegelian dialectics and Social challenges are clarified at this point, while all others are clarified as part of the main discussion in this paper. Because of the strategic place of Nigeria as the most populous country in Africa that is networking with social, political and economic developments of other African nations, a lot of the examples will reflect life situations in Nigeria, which point to similar experience of other Countries on the Continent.

Hegelian Dialectics

Hegelian dialectics deal with varied subject matters, including philosophy, history and the abstracts like contract, law, social values, politics, property, evolution, State and civilization.⁴ From the perspective of the philosophical and the abstract, Hegel pontificated absolute spirit as the beginning and end of all things, insisting that every phase in the development of the world must necessarily follow each other, with each concept consisting of self-made hidden contradictions.⁵ He insisted that an evolution from *being* to *nothing* are two inevitable states which normally result in *becoming*, on the reasoning that every evolution process contains a tripartite cycle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, where *becoming* represents the synthesis of *being* and *nothing*, while each synthesis forms the beginning of a new trend of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.⁶

It is from such philosophical thesis Hegel asserted that life process of human brain is summed up in the process of thinking, in form of "the idea" that transforms into an independent subject of the real world, dwelling in the external phenomenon of "the idea".⁷ He presented the civil society as the clash of social forces to be transcended by the universality of the State,

T. McKenna, 'Hegelian Dialectics' <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03017605.2011.537458>> accessed on 16-08-2021⁴
A.L. Chu, 'Black Infinity: Slavery and Freedom in Hegel's Africa' <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/...>> ⁵
accessed on 16-08-2021

*Ibid.*⁶
T.C. McKaskie, 'Exiles from History: Africa in Hegel's Academic Practice' ⁷
<<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journ...>> accessed on 16-08-2021.

insisting that a person's political status in the State-build up was determined by his private position. To him, the State is the divine idea upon the earth, insisting that an individual participation in the State affairs determines his worth, status and station in life.⁸ As a follow up to this, Hegel frowned at property being shared equally because, as he reasoned, although men are equal but since each possess different capacities and abilities, property should be shared on such index.⁹

Although Marx and Engels differed in relation to some of these thesis of Hegel in some respects but he definitely influenced their thought on social structure, historical materialism, law and the State, upon which several scholars have dragged Marxian dialectics into so much controversies.¹⁰ All the same, Marx rejected Hegel's idealist philosophy and substituted materialism, thus accounting for his averment that "Hegel's dialectics was standing on its head, requiring to be turned right side up...if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell".¹¹

Hegel's thesis on Africa and African laws, which is of particular interest to this paper, has generated a lot of controversies than the work of any other philosopher on African history. By his thesis, Africa is presented as unhistorical, with undeveloped spirit, still operating at the level of mere nature; devoid of morality, religion and political constitution thus justifying Europe's enslavement and colonization of Africa.¹² While conceding that the Atlantic Slave Trade was unjust but he insisted that it was superior to Native African Slavery which he said should only be abolished gradually.¹³ By this, Hegel presented slave trade as an emancipatory project, aimed at rescuing the Negroes from their impenetrability by the civilized world, towards the long dialectical march into world history.¹⁴ Hegel's thesis on the dichotomy between the East and West pitched significance only in four historical worlds of the Oriental, Greek, Roman and German, with progressive spirit of consciousness; but referring to Africa as a land where consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any objective existence.¹⁵

Segregating Africa into three parts of, *Africa proper*, lying south of Sahara; *European Africa*, lying North of the Sahara; and *Egypt*, consisting of the territory connected to Asia, Hegel referred to *Africa proper* as "the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-consciousness in history, is enveloped in the dark mantel of Night".¹⁶ As he asserted, in the "Negro life, the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the

*Ibid.*⁸

*Ibid.*⁹

B. Camara, 'The Falsity of Hegel's Thesis on Africa' <www.researchgate.net/public...> accessed on 16-08-2021.¹⁰

M.J. Lamola, 'Biko, Hegel and the End of Black Consciousness: A Historico-Philosophical Discourse on South

African Racism' *Journal of Southern African Studies* (March 2016) Vol.42(2)183

B. Camara, *op.cit*¹²

O. Adegbindim, 'Critical Notes on Hegel's Treatment of Africa' <www.ajol.info/article/view> accessed on 16-¹³

08-2021

*Ibid.*¹⁴

*Ibid.*¹⁵

A. Omotade, 'Hegel A-Z Philosophy of History-A Challenge to the African Thinker' ¹⁶

<digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/cgi> accessed on 16-08-2021

realization of any substantial objective existence” meaning that Africa has not yet reached the level of realizing her own image because, an average African is a “natural man in his completely wild and untamed state”.¹⁷

Hegel segregated his anthropological setting of the soul or consciousness of Africa into the lowest conceiving phase of mind still trapped in nature, bounded to the body and barely above the level of animality; that level where the soul is only within itself, fully engrossed with the environment. He identified a third developed phase of the soul where it transcends the natural world as an objective and alien to itself, which Hegel regarded as a process. To Hegel, Africa was still under influence of nature, not reaching the level of actual soul and therefore, under influence of nature; hence, it had no role in the third world of history and unable to find placement within Hegel’s philosophical computation.¹⁸

This, in a nutshell is Hegelian dialectics that has raised so much critical literature, calling for review in this paper, especially within peculiar social challenges of the twenty first century.

Social Challenges

From the trend of technological advancement of contemporary world, resulting in globalization in almost every facet of humanity, such trend impacts the world in several ways, including social challenges that are almost running the world aground, in the twenty-first century. Beyond these are struggles for ethnic and cultural identity, youth restiveness, crime wave, corruption, break down of rule of law, conflict of unmanageable information, cross-border transmission of strange diseases, emergence of strange virus attacks to which the world lacks solution, increased commerce, overheating International competition by various States to outwit or dominate one another, and several others.¹⁹ Africa, and Nigeria in particular, has her share of these challenges, ranging from poverty, mismanagement of lean natural resources of each state, ethnic and civil wars leading to ethnic cleansing in some States, in the scale of crime against humanity.²⁰

In most African countries, these challenges take their bearing from corruption of endemic nature, with all forms of devastating effects, sometimes grounding State sovereignty, and in extreme situation, resulting in foisting failed or threatened State status on some African Countries.²¹ As a strategic member of African community, Nigeria’s experience in social challenges may safely pass for case study of what happens in other nations within the Continent, thus explaining several instances of illustrations alluding to Nigeria in this paper. In Nigeria, as in several African Nations, the challenges include National identity problems of various ethnic groups, poverty, inequality and class emphasis, terrorism, high level of impunity and child

*Ibid.*¹⁷

*Ibid.*¹⁸

E. Sall, ‘Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century: Keynote Addresses Delivered at the 13th General Assembly of CODESRIA’ <<https://www.jstor.org/stable...>> accessed on 15-03-2021.

B. Akinterinwa, ‘Challenges of the Twenty-first Century in Nigeria: The Case of National Development and Unity’ <<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index>> accessed on 25-03-2021.

K.R. Cox, ‘Failed States in Question and the Case of Sub-Saharan Africa’²¹ <<https://www.journals.opereedition.org>espacepolitique>> accessed on 25-03-2021.

mortality, unemployment and corruption leading to lack of development, break down of rule of law, abuse of all social institutions, driving the Nigerian nation State to the precipice of a threatened State.²² All these challenges take their bearing from corruption that has virtually become a mentality challenge, attacking every aspect of Nigerian's nationhood, including the economy, education, security, health sector, familyhood and even the religious sector that is supposed to give spiritual and social direction to people.²³ These vices typify what this paper refers to as social challenges of the 21st century, which the paper seeks to show as the driving force that could disintegrate the State and the law, evolving an altogether different social arrangement within the ideals of Marxian dialectics.

Although this paper finds wisdom in looking at corruption as another index of Hegel's dialectics on Africa but to avoid verbosity, the paper would rather avoid detail definition of corruption but instead discuss it as instrument of Hegelian *animality*, resulting in a form of antithesis to Africa's placement in global philosophical and developmental setting. This is done here under the eyes of Hegel and African Jurisprudence.

Hegel and African Jurisprudence

Assessment of Hegel's dialectics on Africa and her contribution to jurisprudential development are as varied as the number of assessors, especially as between those of African descent and those with sympathetic disposition towards Africa on the one hand, and scholars with Western influence on the other. The differences in the assessment are also identifiable from perception of each scholar and various subject matters covered by Hegel's work on Africa, especially as relate to the issue of morality, religion, law, slave trade, political constitution and evolution process of *being to nothing* and the tripartite cycle of *thesis, antithesis* and *synthesis* where *becoming* represents the synthesis, of *being* and nothing, in a situation that each synthesis forms the beginning of a new trend of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Several scholars, influenced by Hegel's views maintain that African Jurisprudence is otiose, no doubt, is borne out of misconceptions including the myth that Africans do not have defined history of organized administration;²⁴ that Africans had little or no system of laws before the arrival of the Europeans;²⁵ that African jurisprudence has no respect for individual rights;²⁶ that African jurisprudence is only positive without negative attributes for correcting breaches;²⁷ that the basis of obligation in African jurisprudence is belief in or fear of supernatural powers;²⁸ that there is no such thing as unity of African laws;²⁹ that political basis of African jurisprudence is

Akinterinwa, *op.cit.*²²

L.U. Udo, 'The Impact and Consequences of Corruption on the Nigerian Society and Economy'²³

<<https://www.ajol.info/ijah>article>view>> accessed on 25-03-2021.

W. Idowu, *op.cit.*²⁴

Ibid, at 56, 82²⁵

Ibid, at 82²⁶

Moore, *op.cit.*; A.J. Aguda, *Nigeria in Search of Social Justice Through the Law* (Nigerian Institute of Advanced²⁷

Studies Publication) 1-5,7

W. Idowu, *op.cit.* at 74²⁸

M. Gluckman, *The Ideas in Barotse Jurisprudence* (Yale University Press, 1965)20²⁹

non-democratic;³⁰ that African jurisprudence lacks literary philosophical significance for general jurisprudence;³¹ and that it does not accord with modern jurisprudential thinking.³² These run-down of prejudice has no doubt relegated the growth of African jurisprudence over the years but recent thought on the need to connect the people's conception of law to their history and values, point to the need to reawake promotion of African jurisprudence for a more meaningful rule of law.³³

An examination of traditional and religious values of various African societies and anthropological findings of various scholars would reveal that criticism of African jurisprudence arises from prejudice against the black world, resulting in scuttling the growth of African jurisprudence and consequent foisting of Eurocentric principles on Africans, in the name of general jurisprudence.³⁴ The assertion that African jurisprudence lacks historical past or literary antecedents upon which any helpful jurisprudential developments could be built, can be easily debunked by the pride of place the history of Egyptian civilization occupies in anthropological findings, similar to anthropological findings on Ethiopia's early connection to outside world and literary representations in that behalf.³⁵ This is why Moore described Hume and Hegel's representations of African literary contribution to philosophical developments as racial and lacking in "empirical methodology to explain racial and cultural differences in human nature".³⁶

In African traditional religion, one cannot talk of law without religion because "it is generally believed that Africans are incurably religious" and that "every sphere of African possibility is influenced by religion" including African idea of law".³⁷ This is why the Barotse of Zambia would rather define law in terms of general ideas about justice, equity and fairness, equality and truth represented in the "laws of human-kind or laws of God".³⁸ Amongst the Yorubas where traditional religion of the Ogboni fraternity oversees administrative and legal set up of the community, a form of democratic checks and balances by which a white traditional calabash was opened by the Ogboni religious body to herald end of a despotic monarchy was the vogue.³⁹ It is in such traditional values the Yorubas have adage such as *ikiti oseni obe nge*, meaning that only "the finger that offends is that which the king cuts" and *nitorri a bease ni afi iloruko* meaning that "we bear names for purpose of identification in case we commit offences".⁴⁰ The Igala people of Kogi State of Nigeria like their Yoruba kins hang up to traditional jurisprudential

Moore, *op.cit*; T. Elias, *The Nature of African Customary Law* (Sweet and Maxwell, 1956) 18³⁰

*Ibid.*³¹

*Ibid.*³²

*Ibid.*³³

W. Idowu, *op.cit* at 74³⁴

M. Gluckman, *The Ideas in Barotse Jurisprudence* (Yale University Press, 1965)20³⁵

Moore, *op.cit*; T. Elias, *The Nature of African Customary Law* (Sweet and Maxwell, 1956)18³⁶

Elias, *op.cit* at 7³⁷

*Ibid.*³⁸

Idowu, *op.cit* at 14³⁹

M.A. Dlamini, 'African Legal Philosophy: A Southern African View' *Journal for African Science*. [1997] Vol.22. ⁴⁰

The Jurisprudence of Igbo people of Nigeria toes the same line; I. Oraegbunam, 'The Principles and Practice of Justice in Traditional Igbo Jurisprudence' <scholarship.lawcornell.edu> accessed on 04-05-2021

values that *magbomu enekate adalen* meaning that both sides to a conflict must be heard because that is the standard of the gods.

It is for such inter-relationship between African traditional values and African jurisprudence that Idowu maintained that “in the traditional sense, law and morality are not especially differentiated as a means of social and communal control” because, in “traditional culture, it is unlikely that what is forbidden by the moral life of the community will be found enjoined expressly in their laws” as “laws and morals bear the essential character of taboos and therefore have the same source; the gods of the land”.⁴¹ This is what Hartland describes as “primitive law” which Idowu attacks as misguided on the basis that justice must not be achieved by similar legal make up, insisting that the essence of law is for settlement of disputes and maintenance of law and order.⁴² Explaining these functions between African and Western laws, Elias said:

The two functions of law in any human society are the preservations of personal freedom and the protection of private property. African law, just as much as for instance English law, does aim at achieving both of these desirable ends.⁴³

It is for this reason it is contended that European conception of law and justices have to be down played in scoring African jurisprudence because they have very little in common with African culture and should therefore not be wholly used to explain the basis of a recognized code of African law, founded on the peculiarities of African principles of justice, especially in criminal matters, inheritance, paternity of children or mortgage.⁴⁴

Indeed, a closer examination of the values of various African ethnic groups would show that the basis of African jurisprudence transcends religious values to several other traditional values that should contribute to a better justice system for all Continents of the world. For instance, amongst the Barotse, the basis of obedience to law is what Gluckman calls “ideal of justice inherent of right and obligations in the right of the responsible man” involving application of laws of rights and obligations in the light of the reasonable man.⁴⁵ On punishment, African concept transcends the offender alone to his family and community as opposed to the individualistic system of the West.⁴⁶

It is from the foregoing, that law is perceived and defined within African jurisprudence in the complexion of natural law, a body of rules reflecting moral and social background of a particular community that has attained such level of notoriety from long usage, which such community endorse as rules or regulations adapted to their social and communal control. While this definition does not claim exclusivity to all African values because some of the values may be antithetical to contemporary values in a globalized world but it is obvious that it presents African

E.S. Hartland, ‘Primitive Law’ <books.google.com/.../primitive-law> accessed on 04-05-2021.⁴²

Idowu, *op.cit* at 12⁴¹

Elias, *op.cit*⁴³

Ibid at 12; Gluckman, *op.cit*.⁴⁴

Idowu, *op.cit*. at 14⁴⁵

Ibid.⁴⁶

law as a reflection of their moral and religious values in its characteristic flexibility that Hegel and his source did not seem to understand or appreciate. In any case, from the discussion thus far, it is obvious that even if African perception of law does not fall in line with the perception of Western jurisprudence, it couldn't be denied as Hegel did. Additionally it is the considered view of this paper that to deny Africa of morality must have been informed by data harnessed from Explorers, Missionaries and traders from Western extraction who judged African perception of law from the background of Western cultures and values.

African Penal system also emphasizes reconciliation in line with African value system which emphasizes sanction such as ostracization, public ridicule and withdrawal of economic cooperation with stern caution to the operators, to avoid punishing the innocent because of grave consequence to the entire society.⁴⁷ What this sums up to is that African jurisprudence, predicated on religious and traditional values tends towards mediating between communalism and the kind of individualism that is the bane of the western world, which is the pivot of universalism of human rights and several related treaties, conventions and articles.

Hard Truth

As observed earlier, some of Hegel's conclusions which deny rationality to Africans, with several damaging effects on the African social structures and whatever Africa represents are distastefully racist and a negation of objective judgment. However, it is the view of this paper that stopping at such generalized level only for the purpose of protecting African race does academic reasoning no good, at all. Instead, the paper takes the view that some of Hegelian summations must be assessed in the context in which his observations were made and then, within the framework of contemporary happenings. Here, the paper interrogates the riddle on how differently the twenty first century scholars would have presented Africa to the world if such scholars had lived and operated in Hegel's era, with the informations at his disposal at the time.

Hegel, no doubt lived and schooled in an environment with an altogether different social and religious values and could not have reached any more objective conclusion than he did, having regards to some *inhumane* cultures of some ethnic groups within African Continent at the time. In the view of this paper, it was difficult for an eighteenth century foreign scholar, unsympathetic to African course, to have reached a different conclusion where trial by ordeal, jungle justice, human sacrifice, the killing of twins, internal slavery, Atlantic slave trade, witchcraft and sorceries were in vogue. The kind of impunity employed by the stronger ethnic groups on expansionist drive and how they treated missionaries and foreign traders who they perceived as carriers of evil spirit because of their colour could not have attracted any better expression from a scholar with European cultural background as Hegel. However, what looks like sympathetic approach to Hegel's damaging view will not do all the justice required without looking at his summation from the perspective of contemporary happenings in Africa.

Gluckman, M., 'Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa'. <www.jstor.org/stable/2147208> accessed on 16-08-2021.⁴⁷

Corruption may be a global scourge but its fallout in various African countries give cause for concern. By the report of Amnesty International in 2020, Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan remain the lowest developed countries from corruption.⁴⁸ In *Quartz Africa's* report for the same period, Seychelles, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Rwanda, Namibia, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa and Ghana were reported as the top ten highest ranked African Countries on the 2019 Perception Index for corruption.⁴⁹ Corruption here is assessed as political. Defining corruption as “the misuse of public power for private benefit”, *Corruption Perception Index* (CPI) ranked Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Singapore and Switzerland as the least corrupt Nations of the world while against 2021, Somalia and South Sudan, two African countries ranked as the perceived most corrupt countries of the world.⁵⁰ Outside these two countries, African Countries trailed bottom of the ladder in developmental ratings, arising from Corruption and ineptitude that the scourge is now ranked as a human right challenge.⁵¹

This explains the description of corruption in Nigeria as a systemic problem because, driven by human instinct for survival, everyone in the system, including all sectors of government, the national economy and even the religious sectors throw decorum to the wind to grab “something from the *National cake*” in the spirit of “if you cannot beat them, join them”. Corruption at such level beats the concept of nationalism hollow and drive collective interest of the society only to a future that never arrives. For instance, the Niger-Delta struggle of Nigeria was originally said to arise from the neglect of the people of that region and truly so, the region lacks roads, standard housing for the rural population, hanging to unproductive farm lands and waters polluted by exploitation of their petroleum resources by the Nigerian government, in concert with Multi-national oil companies.⁵² In response to what looked like the people’s quest for better life, the Nigerian government set up the Niger-Delta Development Commission, with mandate to provide and secure social, economic and infrastructural developments of the region.⁵³ Following this also was the creation of a Federal Ministry for Niger-Delta Development, with budget like any other Ministry within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to ensure robust Federal presence in the region.⁵⁴

Relating under-development to corruption, it is obvious that a society that treats public funds with utter disregard and where such funds are applied only or substantially to individual

Transparency International, ‘CPI 2020: Sub-Saharan Africa’ <transparencyinternational.org/en/news> accessed 02-04-2021.⁴⁸

Y. Kazeem, ‘Africa’s Largest Economies are still Struggling to Kick Out Corruption’⁴⁹
<google.com/amp/s/qx.com> accessed on 02-04-2021.

Wikipedia, <Wikipedia.org/wik> accessed on 02-04-2021.⁵⁰

Transparency Internationals 2016 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) <nationsonline.org/onev> accessed on 02-04-2021.⁵¹

D.E.Agbiboa, B Maiangwa; ‘Corruption in the Underdevelopment of the Niger Deltain Nigeria’ Journal of Pan Africa Studies, vol.5 No.8, December 2012.⁵²

Niger Delta Development Commission established during the Obasanjo Administration in 2002 with sole mandate to develop the oil-rich Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.⁵³

Created for Miniterial Oversight on the Niger Delta Development Commission by late President Umaru Yar’Adua on 10-09-2008 <<https://www.nigerdelta.gov.ng>> accessed on 14-07-2020.⁵⁴

accumulation, such society must experience underdevelopment, as a country of the future.⁵⁵ It cripples development of such a country as in the case of Nigeria, bereaving her of any sustainable social amenities. In the Nigerian situation, corruption has so dwarfed her national development to the extent that inspite of her rich natural endowment and elaborate financial intakes from such resources, the country yet resorts to borrowing, ironically, to also fund corrupt projects.⁵⁶ Corruption raises moral questions on individuals and national probity which invariably affects both domestic and foreign investments that thus hamper national development. In the long run, corruption hampers every aspect of national development, including human and capital development through distorted and unaccountable spending by every aspect of the national life; an obstacle to democratic governance and all other social aspects of the nation.⁵⁷ In Nigeria, like most African Nations, this single vice has been responsible for undermining good governance, dysfunctionality of the relationship between the State and the citizenry, leading to inefficient economic, social and political outcomes in a manner that threatens existence of most African Nation States.⁵⁸

From such taxonomy of corruption in Africa, the major question that calls for resolution is the mentality issue in the African system. Where a single individual corruptly diverts hundreds of Millions of Dollars of public funds and starch such fund in foreign banks, for personal use, it is difficult to determine to what ends such individual would apply such volume of ill-gotten wealth, in a Continent where some citizens are not sure of the next meal; with high level of unemployed youths; infrastructural decay; failure of health, educational and all social amenities. Where to rate the level of civilization and humanness in such a Continent calls for a serious thought. In a Continent where power-grab is never schemed for social services but a design to corruptly service personal interest of public office holders; and in a Continent where people are not as concerned with source of wealth as much as the peanut they could glean from the holder of such wealth for survival, it is difficult to fault Hegel's conclusion of an African as a "natural man in his completely wild, untamed state".⁵⁹

To Hegel, Africa is unhistorical with undeveloped spirit, still operating at the level of mere nature; devoid of morality, religion and political constitution, justifying Europe's enslavement and colonialism.⁶⁰ Segregating Africa into three main classes, Hegel referred to

L.U. Odo, 'The Impact and consequences of corruption on the Nigerian Society and Economy' *International Journal of Arts and Humanities* vol.4 (1), s/n 13 January 2015.

⁵⁶ R.E.Eleanor, 'Corruption, Underdevelopment and Extractive Resource Industries: Addressing a Vicious Cycle' <<https://www.jstor.org/stable>> accessed on 08-08-2020.

⁵⁷ R.E.Eleanor, 'Corruption, Underdevelopment and Extractive Resource Industries: Addressing a Vicious Cycle' <<https://www.jstor.org/stable>> accessed on 08-08-2020.

⁵⁸L.U.Odo, 'The Impact and Consequences of Corruption on the Nigerian Society and Economy' <<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v4i1.13>>accessed on 12-04-2020.

A. Omotade, 'Critical Notes on Hegel's Treatment of Africa' <www.ajol.info/article/view> accessed on 22-08-2021

people inhabiting southern Saharan area of Africa as “Africa proper” which he described as “children of the forest, unaffected by the movement of history....the lad of childhood, lying beyond the day of self-consciousness of history, enveloped in the dark Mantel of the night”.⁶¹ Extreme and otiose as Hegel’s presentation of Africa may sound but it remains to be seen how far African leaders have helped move the Continent from the era that informed Hegel’s summation.

Looking at the level of impunity, ethnic clashes, civil wars and xenophobia of Africans against Africans and how readily disposed Africans are, to kidnapping foreign experts, some of which are un the business of improving the lots of Africans; and seeing the soaring level of kidnapping of Africans by Africans, some of which are brutally killed for financial gain, and seeing the level of human ritual killing for money in this century, it is difficult to fathom how differently Africans could be described except as in Hegel’s perspective when he said for “*Negro life, the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence*”. While an average African prefers to hide his identity in the West, as a “being to” but he would rather work towards destroying his home-state. He prefers to speak and behave foreign but acts African, with the penchant for violence, brutal killing of his perceived opposition, given to electoral violence, armed robbery, gun trotting and high level of selfishness even to the detriment of his extended family members. An average African leader engages in corruption, nepotism, sectionalism, impunity and all forms of flagrant abuse of office. Within the network of corruption are civil servants and security officers who do the bidding of their appointors while the Press looks on, because by Marx dialectics of economic determinism, they all form part of the same superstructure.⁶²

Segregating his anthropological setting into three levels, Hegel rated the lowest as one depicting the soul or consciousness of the mind still trapped in nature, bonded in the body and barely above the level of animality, insisting that Africa, still under influence of nature, has not yet reached the level where it could be reckoned as a contributor to world history and therefore unable to find placement within any of the philosophical contraption.⁶³ Where in Nigeria as in several African countries, public servants sponsor violence against government in the name of religion or for some financial gain; where public servants bid for contract to service public facilities and execute such contracts haphazardly under the supervision of their own cronies and partners in crime; where civil servants network sale of very few available vacancies in public and civil service offices; where developmental loans and grants for alleviation of hardship of core threat like corona virus pandemic could be diverted to few private pockets by the same team appointed to disburse such funds; where public servants engage in fake declaration of their assets on assumption of office without same being investigated by relevant agencies, it is difficult to fathom how Africa can be said to be part of Hegelian concept of evolution from *being* to nothing, resulting in *becoming* within the tripartite process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Hegel, *The Philosophy of History, op.cit*⁶¹

C.A Ellwood, ‘Economic determinism in the Light of Modern Psychology’ <<https://about.jstor.org/terms>> ⁶²

accessed on 22-08-2021.

A. Omotade, ‘Critical Notes on Hegel’s Treatment of Africa’ <www.ajol.infor>article>view> accessed on 22-08-⁶³

2021.

It is the view of this paper that development and historical development in particular, is not solely about the fact that Africa already moved beyond the Hegelian era but a mental state. As Hegel put it, life process of human brain is summed up in the process of thinking in form of “the idea” that transforms into an independent subject of the real world, dwelling in the external phenomenon of “the idea”.⁶⁴ Thus, when by attitude, Africans seem to remain in the past or returning to the *animality* state of Hegel, it is futile to resort to the otiose claim of “how Europe underdeveloped Africa” when Africans do not exhibit the least effort to catch up with the rest of the world.

Again and again, several African scholars relish and refer to early archaeological findings that identified Egypt, an African country as the cradle of world civilization and Ethiopia’s early exposure to outside world without showing the world what the Continent did to build upon such moribund *historical past*. The world needs to know how seemingly unknown Continent like Asia, rose to such level of philosophical, scientific and technological developments where Africa, the so-called forerunner only remains archaeologically relevant. As Taiwo observed, Africa was not alone in the rating of disappearance from radar-screen of philosophy but Asian countries that fell in the same category have taken a stride in making their mark over the years.⁶⁵ Indeed, Nations like China and India can, in the last three to four decades refer to what may be regarded as their philosophy but not Africa. That is why Andindilile bemoaned failure of African philosophers in showing leadership to foreign philosophers, in expressing Africa’s thought as “typical Eurocentric tradition” of adherents of Hegelianism, tending towards prejudice against Africa.⁶⁶ It is unfortunate that several decades after the last colony gained independence, the Received English Laws still apply on several subject matters, and yet, Africans continue to blame Europe for under-developing Africa while African legislators cannot as much as simply re-adapt those foreign laws as indigenous laws of their respective countries.

When African Philosophers buttress their attack on Hegel by citing thoughts of Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkruma, Julius Nyere, Nelson Mandela, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Balewa and Obafemi Awolowo on Africa, such philosophers hardly assess position of those African Patriarchs against the backdrop of their integrity and those of their generations as against contemporary loss of radar in African political and philosophical trend.⁶⁷ It is more disturbing when twenty first Century scholars take solace in what they regard as defensive stance of some of these African patriarchs whose defense of African past against Hegel’s position this paper considers not deep enough because, they are virtually premised on empty emotion. This is why this paper counsels that the only feasible starting point towards dislodging Hegelian views over Africa is not in writing but in mobilizing Africans towards a more proactive mindset, to give Africa a totally different direction in the twenty first century.

2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SEP, ‘Hegel’s Dialectics’ <<https://www.plator.stanford.edu/entries/hegel...>> accessed on 22-08-2021⁶⁴
Philosophy’ *African Study Quarterly*, vol., Issue 4 O. Taiwo, ‘Exercising Hegel’s Ghost: Africa’s Challenge to ⁶⁵
(1998) <<content://com.oper...>> accessed on 22-08-2021.
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP), *op.cit*⁶⁶
Omotade, *op.cit*⁶⁷

This paper reassessed Hegelian dialectics from the perspective of conventional reasoning of most African philosophers of law and history and found that some of Hegel's conclusions that deny rationality to Africans, implying inferior racial, religious, moral and empty jurisprudential values and considerations are awfully distasteful and a negation of objective judgment. However, the paper, using corruption as an index of "animality" in the African Continent took a position that its fallout tend Africa towards a lot on Hegelian thoughts than the dialectics itself. Accordingly, the paper recommends as follows:-

- a. That African philosophers should look inward to decode and tackle root cause of African Continent remaining in the past rather than concentrate on the views of a foreign scholar who expressed his views some two Centuries ago, based on reasonably believable informations in his era.
- b. That African leaders of thought should look beyond the otiose era of "how Europe underdeveloped Africa" for a more proactive thought that will dislodge corruption and other vices that have crippled African Continent over the years.
- c. That like Asian Nations, it is more honorable for Africa to take its own destiny into her hands, to carve a philosophical *niche* for itself that would arrest the futuristic dreams of Africa, to find a place for the Continent in the now.

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