O R I G I N A L A R T I C L E

The Problem of Rationality in the History of African Philosophy

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Abstract: It has been the position of many Eurocentric invaders, anthropologists, ethnographers, philosophers among others that Africans are far from rationality, civilization, and philosophy. Eurocentricists sees themselves as rational being and also sees Europe as the home of civilization and philosophy while Africa is regarded as the home of wild animals, people, culture, barbarians and salvages. This Eurocentric mindset is colored with prejudice against Africans, as the rationality of African natives is questioned. This paper attempts to explain that rationality is universal and as such, African views and ideas should be respected. Also, marginalization and subjugation of the human person through racism should be strongly discouraged. The paper employed the method of critical analysis as well as conceptual clarifications.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on the problem of rationality among Africans has been associated historically with two related happenings: Western discourse in Africa and the African response to it (Masolo, 1). The Western discourse had come form of such notorious proclamations and claims as "reason is Greek", "emotion is African". To some of them, African beliefs are neither rational nor irrational because the categories just do not apply to them .To them, African beliefs are neither rational nor irrational because the categories just do not apply to them. And the postmodernists have held that the concept of rationality does not apply to Africa since the concept is a contested one that presupposes a language game with its complete rules that do not apply across languages and cultures.

The African response has come in different forms and shapes with the African Nationalists, postcolonial African leaders, Pan-Africanists, Scholars intelligentsia, writers and traditionalists alike. The response has sought to re-indigenize, re-africanize the 'natives', to strip her of the alienations of Western modernity that had as it were, made her a person with no identity, hope and force her to return to the 'authentic' and pristine values of a pre-colonial past. The rationality problem is, therefore, the problem of how to determine the place, status and African knowledge in the great debate on the concept of reason (Bassey et el, 1055). It also involves the question of critically analyzing the conceptual issues, implied in the distinction between the civilized and the uncivilized, the logical and the pre-logical or mystical.

THE EMERGENCE OF A DOMINANT RATIONALITY

The rationality debate or problem is understood as the theoretical and practical dimensions depicting the individual's role and impact in the shaping of one's identity and destiny, and control of history and other cultural values. It is the estimation of the basis and merits of cultural norms and the clarification of the supremacy of contending images of man. The debate evolves as claims and counterclaims, justifications and alienations, passed between the two camps: western and non-western. (Masolo, 1). To a large extent, the debate about African philosophy can be summarized as a significant contribution to the discussion and definition of reason or what Hegel called the Reason. Indeed, it is commonly referred to as the "rationality debate".

DEFINING RATIONALITY

The question of how to define the criteria of rationality has become a central theme in Anglophone philosophy. It has occupied debates among social anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers of science. On one side are the foundationalists who argue that formal rational procedures are the defining feature of science, which supersedes common sense and is universal. On one side of the divide are the pluralists, who argue in favour of the diversity of human experience and systems of representation. Most African cultural relativists fall under the later category. This is because they explain culture as a people's experience and ways of life. And as different people have divers experiences so there would be diverse attitudes towards life and issues of life and this cannot be overlooked in adjudging a people's rationality.

The origin of the English word "rational" is the Latin word "ratio" which can be translated as "reason" in English. A rational action or belief is reasonable, one concerning only good reasons for acceptance. "Rationality", as a noun is a power resident in human beings, enabling them to discriminate between reality. Since the action is rational when it is reasonable, it follows that if a reasonable action is that which makes sense, and then a rational action will also be that which makes sense.

We could have or lack reasons for holding any belief to be true; we act rationally when we maintain consistent beliefs, and irrationally when we don't. And to a large extent, this determines our actions. One may also say or hold that the availability of evidence supporting our beliefs can also form a basis to adjudge rationality. These beliefs in themselves have no element of rationality, but one thing as Gordon Reddiford observation remains important, that is the consistency of beliefs with actions. Hence Gordon Reddiford defines rationality as:

> How we come to hold our beliefs, in our attitudes to the evidence for example, and further to the procedures we adopt in maintaining or rejecting them. Thus to ascribe rationality is to comment on our success or failure in continuing to subject them to scrutiny in attempting to maintaining consistency particularly when we express our beliefs in action. (Gordon 43).

This position poses a serious moral problem; which is that of accepting as rational, an immoral belief which is expressed consistently in actions. Would Reddiford regard as rational Hitler's belief that the Jews are chickens, which was consistently expressed in action? Would my belief that a particular neighbour of mine as an enemy, which I express in killing him be regarded as rational? Or does a mere good reason for an action makes that action rational? The problems associated with the definition of 'good' would cause a rather quick abandonment of such

definitions of rationality; they are rather sophistry than normative.

This is unlike the positions of some western scholars like Aristotle and Steven Lukes. Lukes identifies criteria, which held beliefs that a set of beliefs has to satisfy for them to be adjudged rational;

(i)   such systems are logical, that is consistent and admit no contradiction
(ii)   they are not wholly or partially false,
(iii)   not nonsensical
(iv)   not situationally specific or ad-hoc, enduring just for a very short time that is must be universalisable (Umoh, 12).

Among all the criteria listed above, the criterion of logicality stands out among others. For if a belief is illogical one can rightly infer that it is nonsensical, partially or wholly false, and inconsistent. The criteria of logicality was first formulated by Aristotle, as Sogolo opines,

> Aristotle was the first philosopher to systematize all forms of positive thinking about thought the result of which was the invention of formal logic. (68)

Since the formulation of formal logic by Aristotle, it has remained indispensable for correct thinking and thus has been describe as the systematic formulation of instinctive logic of common sense (Sogolo, 68).

The fundamental laws in formal logic as formulated by Aristotle are

(i)   the law of identity which simply states that a thing is equal or identical with itself (A equal A)
(ii)   The law of contradiction. Strictly speaking, it is a negative formulation of the first law. The law of contradiction states, that a thing cannot be unequal to or different from itself; (A is not none-A)
(iii)   The law of excluded middle. This particular law of formal logic combines, the first and the second. It states that if a thing is equal to itself, it cannot be unequal to or different from itself (if A equal A, it cannot be equal non-A) (Sogolo, 68).

The formulation of the Aristotelian logic was meant to serve as a standard, a yardstick for adjudging the intelligibility or otherwise of a thought system, it is normative. Scholars of different ages, like Evans Pritchard, Martin Hollis, Steve Lukes, etc, felt the inclination to insist that for my form of thought or action to be adjudged intelligible or rational, it has to conform to the rules of formal logic.

THE BRUHLIAN SOCIO-COGNITIVE BIFURCATIONISM

The image of the 'scientific society' set out to be projected by intellectual school pioneered by Tylor and sociologists such as Levy Bruhl, Evan Pritchard, Martin Hollis, and Steven Lukes, is that of "rational excellence" and "institutionalized rationality".

It is on this Eurocentric belief that Levy Bruhl bifurcated the human society into two categories-those of a 'primitive mentality' and those with a 'civilized mentality'. Africa by this bifurcation falls under the former category. According to Peterman, Levy Bruhl describes a 'pre-logical thought' as one that is unscientific, uncritical and contains evident contradictions. People with such thoughts differ not in degree but in quality from those with a logical mind. (405).

The African thought system has been adjudged irrational because according to Bruhl, it is insensitive to the rules of formal logic as formulated by Aristotle. Hollis states that these

rules render it possible to make a transcultural and comparative judgment as to the degree of rationality and irrationality in a belief and action system (Masolo, 130). This is exactly what levy-Bruhl did when he found contradictions in assertions such as when the Nuer says 'twins are birds" or "crocodiles are spirits'*. From Levy-Bruhl's point of view, it is a clear violation of the rules of logic, which do not permit a thing to be itself and yet another thing. The Nuer is therefore involved in contradiction by saying that a twin is a twin (A is A) and at the same time that a twin is a bird (A is non- A) (Sogolo, 71).

On the surface Levy Bruhl could have been said to have made an innocent observation about the thought system of the Nuer people. It is the fact that such interpretation would be inevitable following the Aristotelian logic. For instance, the Nuer people see birds as divine creatures from above because they fly. They also held the belief that twins are likened as birds, special gifts from God and precious to man. This would have been a mere use of metaphor within Western literary expressions and thought system. The expression 'that man is a lion', is no violation of any rule of formal logic. That would simply mean that the man is as strong as a lion, acts like a lion or is fearless and courageous.

It goes to show convincingly that, Levy Bruhl's misinterpretation of the Nuer's saying was never an oversight. It was an orchestrated attempt to devaluate the Africaness of the Africans with the aim to foster a Western control and determination of her destiny and identity. Therefore the denial of Africans of rationality by the West- Levy Bruhl, Hegel and the rest, rested on a satanic prejudice against the Africans.

The pre-logical mentality connotes that the Africans are not a race different from *the* animals. This speculation about the Africans as inferior and savages was intertextually entrenched within the universal discourse of tile French, British and German enlightenment thinkers. This Western attitude according to Masolo "had started as a mere cultural bias, supported loosely by a racist or orthodox biblical ideology," which gradually grew into a formidable two-pronged historical realities, slavery and slave trade on the one hand and academic expressions on the other. (130).

What Masolo calls the 'academic expressions' were actually seen as the justification for colonizing Africa with the delusion that Europe was spreading civilization. A further choice sampling of the underpinnings of this colonial 'academic expressions' would show clearly their mentality and mindset.

Hume was of the conviction that the Africans due to their blackness are precluded from the realm of reason and civilization. He opines:

> I am apt to suspect that the Negroes, and in general the other species of men to be naturally inferior to whites. There never was a civilized, nation of any complexion than white (Serequeberham, 6).

Serequeberham claimed that Kant feels that the fact that Africans were black from head to foot was clear proof that whatever they say was stupid (6). This implies that there are fundamental differences between the two races of man, differences that were more in mental capacities than colour.

For Hegel in his *'Philosophy of the World History'*, the Negroes are beyond the pale of humanity, with the consciousness that has not yet reached an awareness of any substantial objectivity. He articulates this thought thus;

> Of God or the law- in which the will of man could participate and which he could become aware of his being. The African, in his undifferentiated and

> concentrated unity, has not yet succeeded in making this distinction between himself as an individual and his essential universality so that he knows nothing of an absolute being which is other and higher than his own self (Masolo, 4).

Africans from this point of view is neither part of world history, nor part of humanity. People without culture and history, living in a state of innocence, unconscious of themselves as in the natural and primitive state of Adam and Eve in the biblical paradise and will. This state could be likened to the state of nature described by the Social Contractarians- Hobbes and Locke. In like manner, Marx and Engel articulated these same Eurocentric views as part of their philosophic – historical position (Bassey, 1550) . For them, the colonial Europeanization of the globe was a prerequisite for the possibility of true human freedom, which to them, is communism.

These discourses on Africa and Africans underestimated and disparaged African culture and identity. It denied that 'reason' played any significant role in the development of a person, society and culture in Africa, as it did in Europe. To the colonizers then, Africans had no abiding values and lacked generally, the intellectual and moral resources of the Europeans, whose mission in Africa was a 'civilizing mission'. This civilizing mission, which was in the form of colonization and Christianization of the Africans, created a crisis of self-identity and. Africa was 'rapped' through these missions, human dignity was injured and the self-confidence of the Africans sapped, which caused the type of soul-searching, we have in Africa. The civilizing mission of Europeans was an active program by the Europeans to change the African's supposed inferior ways of life to conform to European models in some important areas of human experience such as education, religion, economics, politics etc. The very feet that the Africans were conquered were taken as proof of me unhistoricity and lack of humanness of the colonized. Colonial racism succeeded in alienating many Africans from their own culture (Ikegbu and Bassey, 368). There became a preference for European culture, values, and mores. Some Africans began to see themselves inferior to the whites, and our culture through Christian indoctrination, barbaric, inhuman and devilish.

Through education and religion (Christianity), the European languages became official languages of most African countries, to the extent that our children feel ashamed to speak African native languages, and ashamed when unable to speak the so-called language of enlightenment. This implanted colonial and colonizer's mentality, has made it difficult for this ugly situation to be reversed in any way. This is the mentality that makes a formerly colonized person, over-value foreign things coming from his erstwhile colonial master. 'Things here is to be interpreted widely to include not only material objects, but also modes of thought and behavior. (Wiredu and Gyekye, 62).

This cultural dislocation landed Africa in the problem of self-definition and identity, forced to ask 'Who are we as a people?" "What were we as a people?" "How do we fashion out an enduring and a viable future?" Africans have found it difficult to find appropriate responses to these questions because Africa today is caught in between a past s/he could not recall and a present and future she could not envisage.

Despite all these, the dominance of the colonial mentality was not absolute; and this explains the reason why there is the problem of self-search and definition. Put differently, the obvious fact of this consciousness in Africa shows that indigenous modes of thought and action have not been eclipsed by colonialism (Wiredu and Gyekye, 62). It shows that the colonialists did not take the pain to penetrate and adequately 'educate' the rural interior of African countries.

As a result of this, dome African locales still retained a large part of their indigenous world outlook (Wiredu and Gyekye, 62). These are the sages, according to Oruka, that have not been unduly influenced by Westernism.

EXPLAINING "RATIONALITY" AMONG AFRICANS AND CULTURE

There have been many dimensions to the question of the rationality of Africans and their culture. These dimensions focus on different aspects of the problem of rationality in Africa such as, the question of whether Africans are as human as other people of the world. The African's philosophical responses and the concept of cultural relativism were attempts by prominent Africa to give answers to some of the questions raised in the problem of rationality, and also to restore self confidences, prestige and honour to Africa, knowing fully well that colonialism which resulted to cultural discontinuity and dislocations made the Africans more of a people who have lost confidence in themselves. (Umoh, 12).

The early Pan-Africansists like Edward Blyden, Dubois, Joseph Ki-zerbo, Africans Horton and postcolonial African leaders like Leopald Senghor, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Azikiwe, etc, saw the solution to the crisis of culture and rationality in Africa in the discovery of authentic African ideas and thought systems uninfluenced by alien accretion, which gave birth to concepts like Ujaama, Negitude, African Socialism, etc.

In the same vein, contemporary African philosophers like Kwasi Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye, Segun Oladipo, Robin Horton, K.C. Anyanwu, Gnyewuenyi, to mention but a few, have upheld *the* concept of cultural relativism and demonstrated convincingly in their scholarly writings that indeed before Western contact with Africa, Africa had history and culture which was scientific and in fact with traces of the origin of modern medical science

They further have held that philosophy did not spring up from vacuum. Philosophers from all ages were tremendously influenced by their society and culture, since most of what they postulated was already fore grounded in their culture. And philosophy being always a corollary of a culture presupposes that no philosophical theme or problem can completely be understood and handled without familiarity with the culture and language from which it originated (Oruka, 90).

If there is any modicum of truth in what we are saying above; it would imply that philosophy arises from the culture of a people, that no culture is bereft of philosophy. That Africa is not bereft of philosophy was further demonstrated by Oruka in his four trends/ orientations in African philosophy, where he identifies the various sources and ways in which African philosophy was done-ethno philosophy, philosophy sagacity, the nationalist-ideological philosophy, and the professional philosophy. Senhor came up with his African epistemology; unique African mode of knowing; and Mbiti, his African concept of time. These various responses were articulated to affirm and to put to bed the question of "rationality" among Africans.

However, many years after the colonial era, many African countries eventually got political independence, but the vital question still remains 'how can they further demonstrated rationality in African political arena?, especially Africa political leaders who fought slavery and colonialism and eventually took over at different leadership roles within the continent. This would be our concern in the next session of this paper as we also examine our roles in this historical 'rape' of Africa.

THE POSTCOLONIAL AFRICANAND THE PROBLEM OF RATIONALITY

Postcolonial Africa is still besieged by problems arising from the accident, and the design of history. The continent boasts of the highest numbers of failed and nearly failed states such as Burundi, Cote D'lvoire, Congo, DR, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Angola. Oyeshile has observed that we cannot controvert the fact that ethnic, conflicts and wars have resulted in gross underdevelopment in the African continent (Oyeshile, 10). The wanton destruction of lives and property, human, material and natural resources, the problem of corruption, ethnicity, leadership, poverty, diseases, hunger, death, and diseases, have all been wholly in part attributed to the phenomenon of slavery, colonialism and military incursion into the African body polity. One clearly understands the pulse of those who feel and argue this way. Hence Oguejiofor has recognized that

> The effect of slavery on African society was thus not limited to visible factors; even of greater consequence and the invisible political, psychological and social effect. The millions of people carted away meant a drastic reduction of the productive capacity, especially when those sought after were those at the bloom of their lives, wars aimed at gathering slaves, and other raids meant serious rupture of economic and social life (Oguejiofor, 19).

One way that we have reacted to Africa's predicament, problems and failures has been to put blames on external causes like-slavery, colonialism, and militarism. While these factors have contributed, it would be wrong to assume that the transatlantic slave trade described as the "most iniquitous transaction in human history" (Oguejiofor, 26) was solely perpetrated in the African continent by outsiders. The African chiefs and rulers who through chains of middlemen penetrated the interiors of Africa on behalf of the European slave merchants to capture slaves and negotiate with the buyers aided part of what we have attributed and considered the impacts of slavery (Oguejiofor, 28).

It is of great interest that this trade lasted for over four hundred years. It has left one to begin to wonder helplessly how this business was sustained for that long. There were probably excellent strategic management processes and plans on sustainability. Evidence abounds to show that this was big business in all its ramifications for those who engaged in it -Africans and non-Africans alike, as Oguejiofor observes that the "Medieval kingdoms of west Africa derived great wealth through the export for slaves (Oguejiofor, 27). These African traditional rulers might have functioned in different capacities at management levels of slave trading partners or companies. There were, one would suppose excellent succession plans to enhance business growth from generation to generation. One cannot but help to ask "how was Africa able to sustain the supply of slaves consistently to Europe?" Your gaze is as good as mine.

The point that we can't fail to make clear here is that whatever mentality that was predominant, and whatever justification given for the Africans participation and partnership in this inhuman and hideous treatment of fellow Africans, some of who as Don Affonso of Congo observes were "sons of the land and sons of our noblemen, vassals and our relatives (Oguejiofor, 25). This could be a reason while Rudyard Kipling branded an African as "half devil and half child" (Ezeh, 213-214). There was no iota of sense of brotherhood and love exhibited by these African merchants. Where was that spirit of communalism that African's were known? For whatever reason, Some African leaders failed, and I think, this justified the description by the Europeans as pre-logical. The era of the slave trade ended, thanks to some Europeans, especially

some British who were very instrumental to this.

The process of independence started with different constitutional developments in Africa, after the Second World War and eventually, many African states became politically autonomous. The African leaders naively embraced the legacies of the colonial administration. It was as Oguejiofor explained a mere change of guards, with the indigenous politicians replacing the Europeans in the same positions, in the same system that they fought for so long to overthrow (Oguejiofor, 47).

It seems some Africa countries were not ready for political independence, which has shown in the ways they have managed their affairs, even till now. However, with the ascendance of the military juntas into power in Africa who were, "half-educated, inexperienced and incompetent Corporals, Master Sergeants, Lieutenants and Captains. Africa was further sent into the abyss of political instability and rudderless leadership" (Oguejiofor, 37). Those dark ages of military rule was terrific and horrifying, with such leaders as Idi Amin of Ugandu, Bokassa of Central Africa Republic, Mobutu of Zaire, Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethopia, late Samuel Doe of Liberia, Sani Abacha of Nigeria and Michael Mikombero of Burundi. Again this era showed clearly, up to date, our inability to demonstrate rationality and prove the West wrong that we can paddle our boat unaided by them. It is obvious that African leaders, immediate past and present, inherited some devilish traits from the traditional African rulers who aided the slave trade, especially 'selfishness'. For more than half a century in Nigeria, we are still to graduate from our studentship.

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY: PROVE THAT AFRICANS ARE RATIONAL

However, despite the above, the Eurocentric thinkers of the 19th and early 20th centuries thought that philosophy was a European phenomenon. When the idea of an African philosophy was raised after the publication in 1945 of P. Temples' book, it was a shock to those who had been educated and brought up on the idea that the only genuine philosophy was European philosophy. There is no doubt, however, that India, China, and Japan have long traditions of philosophical reflection Many individuals, both African and non-African, were awakened from a dogmatic slumber. Indeed, the titles of articles written during this period reflect the foregoing in their emphasis on the following: Does African philosophy exist? What is African philosophy? Those and similar questions seemed to indicate that Africa, African cultures, and Africans themselves lacked the dispositions that are presumably essential for philosophy. Some of these writings were based on the views of Eurocentric thinkers such as L. L. Bruhl and others who thought that African philosophy could not exist, because the African mind lacks the attributes that are essential for philosophy. Bruhl coined the idea of the "primitive mentality" of the "savage", and Senghor echoed this sentiment by claiming "reason is Hellenistic while emotion is black". There were many Africans who were ready to endorse such denigrating assertions.

The debate about whether African philosophy existed occurred in the context of these assumptions. Thus, for some, the very expression itself was offensive, because it appeared that one was talking about something that did not exist because philosophy was exclusively European. One need not have been born or live in a specific region of the world. *Reason is a universal* human trait that has different gestalts depending on where and in what contexts it is put to use. It is puzzling that, particularly starting with modernity and the Enlightenment, reasoning has been thought to be the attribute of only a certain segment of humanity. It is this

phenomenon that inspired many philosophers to engage in the debate. The debate was not in vain because it produced numerous useful philosophical texts. Indeed, the significance of these debates should not be underestimated with regard to their contribution to building the confidence of Africans to both overcome the imperializing of knowledge and produce new knowledge. It is this phenomenon that decisively motivated African philosophers to create philosophical texts that addressed specific philosophical themes. In this regard, the three books edited by E. C. Eze between 1996 and 1998 should be noted. These books treat a wide range of issues. For example, in "African Philosophy's Challenge to Continental Philosophy", R. Bernasconi addressed the issue of whether African philosophy is just like any other philosophy or whether it is unique. He pondered the implications of answering the question one way or the other and eventually underscored that African philosophy has both deconstructive and reconstructive tasks. Through its deconstructive tasks African philosophy points out the contradictions within the texts of continental philosophy. He noted,

> If continental philosophers would open themselves to critique from African philosophy and thereby learn more about their own tradition seen from "the outside" they would find that the hegemonic concept of reason had been displaced, and they would be better placed to learn to respect other traditions, including those that are not African (Bernasconi, 192).

Bernasconi pointed to an important deconstructive task of African philosophy in this regard, highlighting a crucial intercultural phenomenon without mentioning it by name. By referring to how African philosophy is denied or excluded from the philosophy of humankind, he was noting that one of the points that deconstruction could discuss is the exclusion itself. The question of whether Greek philosophy owes a debt to Egyptian philosophy is important. Why has the indebtedness of Greece to Egypt, which was acknowledged by earlier Greek sources, been denied since the dawn of the modern age? What is the contribution of deconstruction to the contemporary dialogue between Western philosophy and African philosophy? Although Bernasconi does not refer to them by name, these are elements of intercultural encounters. Therefore, according to Bernasconi, African philosophy has both deconstructive and reconstructive tasks. The deconstructive task is concerned with,

> ... the unmasking and undoing of the Eurocentric residue inherited from colonialism. The unmasking aims at the grounding parameters and cultural codes inscribed in these (Eurocentric) political, economic, educational and social organizations that still remain oriented by colonial and European condescending attitudes. What deserves mentioning in this regard is the task of an African(a) philosophy engaged in exposing the racism of Western philosophy (Bernasconi, 190).

The reconstructive task of African philosophy involves what it can add to continental philosophy or even to the philosophy of humankind in general. This is an appropriately intercultural practice that involves offering, from an African perspective, concepts, insights, methods, and other contributions that can enrich those who encounter them.

CONCLUSION

The state, destiny and the value that Africa has today in the globalized village, has to a great extent been determined by the outcome of the flu's debate and the problem of rationality.

The outcome, of which included the consequent enslavement and colonization of Africans which were justified in the premise that Africans were sub-humans, and indeed needed to be humanized and civilized through servitude and colonialism.

As we set out to redefine rationality in the context of African, and Africa's predicament, we recognize the fact that the failure of some African leaders at different ages and eras to demonstrate rationality as we clearly showed is not in any way to be attributed to the totality of Africans (Bassey and Mfonobong, 4). It is also true that when you re-examine closely the 'academic expression' of the West about Africa, they are dosed with irrational and prelogical analyze if and thoughts. There is no logical connection between the complexion of the Africans, with reason or civilization as Hume and Kant believed. And levy Bruhl classification of African's as periodical based on his interpretation of the never say, was also a clear proud exhibition of guidance and total privation of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

One essential feature of man is his rationality, which distinguishes him from other animals, and this applies to all peoples. There is no evidence to show that God created some people rationally and others irrational. If the biblical records are anything to go by, God created man in his image and likeness. To say that Africans are irrational would imply that God is irrational. Or that African, were not created by God. This is why we consider as a betrayal, the Senghorean theory of African mode of knowing, which seems to suggest that Africans do not rely on the facility of reason in apprehending the external object.

The purpose of a society can only be achieved if there is rationality. Co-existence in a society will be hampered without a sense of rationality and attitude to lay, essential society values, such as tolerance, respect, freedom, equality, justice, and value for human life, should be imbibed

Of great interest here would be the criteria given by Steven Lukes for the rationality or otherwise of any belief system. This is known as practical rationality. This criterion emphasizes the ability of a practice to aid people in attaining their goals. In other words, this theory also known as instrumental rationality means that acting in a way is maximally efficient in achieving one's goals.

Some of the goals Africa, would be to ensure that our religions and cultural differences do not form the basis for hatred, violence, and insecurity, to fly high above the bumps of ethnicity and ethnic consciousness, to overcome hunger, poverty, corruption, war, strive, disease, political and societal values, policies, laws and practices that would ensure freedom, justice, equality and total development of Africa would be very instrumental in achieving our desired goals in Africa. Anything short of this would widely be adjudged irrational in Africa by Africans.

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