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**AFRICAN JOURNALISM WITHIN THE ETHOS OF THE AFRICAN
RENAISSANCE**

By

KOFI AKOSAH-SARPONG, B.A. (Concordia)

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research**

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Journalism

School of Journalism and Communication

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

20 August, 2001

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RENAISSANCE**

submitted by Kofi Akosah-Sarpong, B.A.

**in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'O. Ansah', written above a horizontal line.

Thesis Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

The long-running crises facing Africa have sparked the need for an African Renaissance process. The African Renaissance process recognizes the fact that the crises confronting Africa today is both internal as well as external. If the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism suppressed the inner growth of Africa's values, Africans attitudes and certain aspects of their culture also explain the crises that they are going through. The African Renaissance process, therefore, attempts to revive the long suppressed African values and reconcile them with the enabling aspects of the global ones.

But how is the African journalist, largely educated in Eurocentric values, to facilitate the African Renaissance? This thesis explores the fact that for the African journalist to facilitate the African Renaissance he/she must first shift paradigm from Eurocentric to Afric-centric in order to ground its models in African values. For this reason, I offer a new African journalistic model—*New African Journalism*. This is the reconciliation between elements of global journalism—freedom, equity, objectivity, accuracy, justice, fairness, truth, etc—and African values. I offer, also, a prescription on how to achieve it, and optimistically, offer prospects that will flower the *New African Journalism* under the African Renaissance process.

To all the forces trying to spark the African Renaissance process

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my sincere thanks to all the people who, in diverse ways, have contributed some part in the writing of this thesis. Whether by providing information about the African Renaissance process through a casual conversation, or my argument with people about the African predicament, each person who has touched my life for the past five year when it dawn on me that Africans have not critically considered their culture in relation to progress and started debating it has added to my research.

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PREFACE

This thesis aims to extend the ethos of African journalists by arguing for the broadening of their professional paradigms to include serious culture discussions in the face of the crises facing Africa today. These crises have given rise to the African Renaissance process, which aims to revive the long-suppressed African culture and reconcile it with the enabling aspects of the global ones. For broader insight in the African crises, despite its diversity, Africa is discussed as one whole entity with commonality of belief systems, problems, prospects, and aspirations.

The African journalist draws inspiration from the African Renaissance process to put African culture under public scrutiny for critical discussions in relation to Africa's progress. But before they can do this African journalists need to redefine themselves culturally by freeing himself/herself from many a Eurocentric garb. This means keeping the core traditional journalistic principles and re-educating themselves in relation to African culture and history.

Accordingly, this thesis is strictly about how the African journalist discusses African values without any fear of ethnocentrism in relation to the continent's progress. By this he or she will be able to understand both the positive aspects of the culture such as *ubuntu* ("I am because We are") and the inhibiting aspects such the domination of occult *juju/marabou* on African elites. A *New African Journalism* model is offered in relation to some prescriptions about how African journalists should seize upon the climate opened by the African Renaissance process; the boom in publications of African history and culture; conferences and seminars about African culture and history, and the new media, especially the Internet.

INTRODUCTION

The African Renaissance process aims at reviving the pure African culture, long frozen in the African development process. Among other objectives, it seeks simultaneously to reconcile African culture with Africa's colonial legacies and the global system. The revival of culture has come about in the face of acute crises facing Africa: diseases like HIV/AIDS, corruption, predatory and confused elites, poverty, morals and customs that oppose Africa's progress, state paralysis, civil wars, closed culture, and many more.

In this regard, argument will be advanced in support of the thesis that African journalists and media houses have a role to play in shaping the African Renaissance through African culture to make the renaissance conducive to development. This is the thesis statement, the central argument of my research. This thesis, therefore, attempts to analyze, in the context of African culture, the contribution of African journalists and their institutions as critical facilitators within the on-going ethos of the African Renaissance process. Faced with daunting crises, the evolving development paradigm in Africa today calls for some kind of renaissance aimed at the realization of the aims of development or nationalist aspirations including alleviation of poverty and the stability of the African ethnic groups. It was this nationalist aspiration that animated the independence struggles but was lost along the way when Africa became engulfed in neocolonialism and failed to look deeply within itself. An understanding of culture is essential to assessing the role of the African journalist as an effective contributor to African development. The African Renaissance process demands the existence of systems capable of providing the appropriate education necessary for creating from among the African peoples the proper type of values as well

as responsible citizens aware of their civic duties. One of these systems is an effective network of African journalism. This makes the role of African journalist and their institutions crucial to the renaissance process. However, African journalism is meaningless until and unless it is compatible with the cultural environment to which it is intended. The African journalist must therefore seek to understand and explain what culture is all about and to encapsulate any contribution to the renaissance within it. The theme and nature of this thesis, therefore, is wrapped around *culture, journalism* and the *African Renaissance process*.

In the five chapters that comprise this research *culture, the African Renaissance process* and *journalism* are the dominant themes with each flowing into the other. An explanation of these themes in the context of this thesis is given as follows:

- (1) *Culture* as the totality of a people's knowledge, thought, behaviour, attitude, beliefs and perceptions, orientations, laws, spirituality, moral-ethical regulations, and traditions. Continuous socialization into prevailing culture reproduces people whose beliefs, attitudes and orientations toward objects reflect their values.
- (2) Caught in a state of crises—diseases like HIV/AIDS, civil wars, corruption, predatory elites, poor economic performance--the *African Renaissance process* is the rebirth of the African culture and its simultaneous reconciliation with the desirable aspects of the global culture, such as democracy and human rights. The cultural rebirth aims at opening African culture not only with the purpose of extracting its positive aspects for use or demonstrating its aesthetic qualities, but

also to expose its polluted elements that tend to inhibit Africa's progress to public scrutiny and their eventual eradication.

- (3) *Journalism* is conceptualized as the trade of gathering, processing, and dissemination of information within the shared values of people. The informing and reporting are done in a factual, fair, impartial, and objective manner. Here, objectivity within the context of both African cultural values and the traditional journalism tenets of looking at all sides of an issue. Once again, objectivity here is reconciling the African culture with issues troubling or helping Africa's progress in order to open up the African culture to the forces of progress. In the course of undertaking all these, journalism's roles include teaching, educating, assisting in forming consciousness, agenda-setting, advocating, investigating, acting as a public voice, commenting on ideas and events, and influencing public opinion.

The research, therefore, looks at the African culture and places the African Renaissance process in that context. This thesis will not be understood until what is meant generally by culture and its impact on progress is explored. Culture is considered as the main motor to direct the renaissance process. The strengths and weaknesses of the existing African culture are thereafter examined. Scrutinizing and critically analyzing some weaknesses in African culture which might act as obstacles to the development process does not necessarily imply any reinforcement of the negative views touted elsewhere to portray the African culture as "backward" or Africans as "uncivilized." On the contrary, the research aims at constructively drawing attention to inhibitions within the African culture that tend

to slow down development while at the same time helping to emphasize the positive aspects that are conducive to the same processes of development.

The research framework is African culture but the approach is an eclectic combination of empirical methods. For this reason, and in relation to the two methods, the thesis employs the method of triangulation to draw reliable conclusions on the process of exploratory research. The primary sources of the research are interviews and notes taken from conferences I attended. The secondary sources are library research and other documents obtained from conferences I attended. The unit of analysis and the unit of measurement are both the African journalist operating in the African cultural environment. Hence, no ecological or individual fallacy is envisioned.

The research problem is cast within a frame of questions about the role of the African journalist in the African cultural environment and within the ethos of the African Renaissance. These questions include the following:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of African culture?
- Should African journalism be defined to make it conducive to the development aspirations of the African people, and, if so how?
- What should be the structure and functions of African journalism?
- What should be the source of the mandate of African journalism?
- Given that Africa comprises several nation-states with differing historical development experience and resource endowment, what are the likely obstacles in establishing common ethics and regulations for African journalism?

- Should African journalism contribute to the success of the African Renaissance, and, if so, in what ways?
- How can African journalism acquire the expertise compatible with African culture, given that African journalists are trained in Western style education?
- What is the African culture within which African journalism is to be cast? In this sense, does Africa have one common culture as the basis for its renaissance?
- What important variables from the African cultural environment and the external world can impact on African journalism and to what extent can these be controlled as the African culture becomes opened through the African Renaissance process?

These questions are not ends in themselves but the bases for collecting data or information from which hypotheses may be constructed or some general theses derived as the main theme of the research. The research itself may generate other questions and expose problems that the architects of the African Renaissance might have overlooked. Some of the problems may be relatively difficult to resolve, some may require some form of external assistance and support from local non-government organizations and others may be within the capacity of the African states themselves. What is more important is the identification of these problems and suggestions for their resolution. The approach of this research may be described as largely exploratory. This should not be interpreted to mean that hypotheses relating to patterns observed might not be put to rigorous and critical testing. The analysis of the research problems may itself be a contribution to the African Renaissance process. However, it is recognized that the quality of any research

depends to a large extent on the objectivity of the researcher and methodology applied in the collection of information and data and their analysis.

Chapter One analyzes current intellectual discussions about culture and progress. Attempts are made to fit these discussions to the cultural environment of Africa. The chapter attempts to grapple with what is culture in its broader sense. The aim here is to relate this in the overall understanding of African culture to progress. The chapter seeks to understand African culture from its diverse linkages. For this reason, I attempt a refutation of the long held view that Africa, comprising “54 countries, 4 racial groups, and more than 2,000 ethnic communities” (Ayitteh, 1998,p.xii), has no common culture. This is the culture within which the African journalism is to be cast.

Chapter Two captures the debate among Africans themselves about the implications of their culture and progress. While some say certain cultural practices have to be modified to suit contemporary situations, others call for the de-freezing of some long suppressed morals and customs to shape policy formulation. Institutions such as the World Bank have suggested reconciliation between African culture and the colonial legacies. The high incidence of belief in supernatural powers in Africa’s affairs is treated broadly here and, especially so, its negative impact on development. Pitika Ntuli, among others, explains how the African virtue of *ubuntu* has to be revived to correct the low radius of trust among Africans. Others like Lesibo Teffo offer that *ubuntu* can be used as a management principle to unshackle the Eurocentric one currently in use in Africa and which does not fit the African environment well.

Chapters One and Two, therefore, wrestle with the strengths and weaknesses of African culture.

Chapter Three analyzes the African Renaissance process debate within the context of African culture, and I offer, in a definitional and exploratory way, what the African Renaissance is. The decline in the quality of the African life through diseases, excessive influence of belief in supernatural powers on the African public sphere, civil wars, massive corruption, the inability to ground the African development paradigm in African values are discussed. The chapter explains in more detail that, as a social engineering process, the African Renaissance process attempts to open up the African culture to expose both its inhibiting and positive aspects. Arguments are advanced in support of the view that, as an activist-oriented paradigm, the African Renaissance process grounds all development models and theories in African culture first, and any others second. The African Renaissance searches for ways in which theories of development in Africa can be African-centred, or Afri-centric, and how these can be reconciled with some of the desirable elements of the global culture such as human rights, democracy, accountability and technology. It is explained that policies required to address social problems such as corruption may be found within African culture, as seen in the “Etta” thesis of “Sons in high places and communities,” that’s culture as the fuel of corruption.

Chapter Four wrestles with how the African journalist is to critically facilitate the African Renaissance process. The definition and purpose of African journalism and its role in the

Renaissance process are explored. The chapter argues that the success of the African Renaissance process depends to a large extent on the power of communication within the context of African culture. However, considering the history of African journalism alongside the suppression of the African cultural values during the creation of the African nation-states by Europeans, there is the need for paradigmatic shift if African journalists are to be effective in facilitating the rebirth of Africa. African journalism has to be rooted in African philosophy and values just as Western journalistic philosophies are rooted in Western values. From colonialism to the present, the missing link in African journalism has been the lack of input of African values to satisfy Africa's interest. This is precisely so because the African journalist has been Western-style trained.

Colonial media practices were biased against African values for they were intended to satisfy the interests of the metropolis of the colonizer and not the interest of African for African social formations. The chapter, in attempting to tie journalism models, or principles, to the African culture and the African Renaissance, asks and takes African journalists through the crusades of the European Enlightenment thinkers. The idea here is to borrow from the European Enlightenment thinkers, who from 16th to 18th centuries, waged sustained campaigns to rid their societies of excessive influence of supernatural powers, and other layers of dirt within their culture that were preventing them from moving toward progress.

The European Enlightenment thinkers separated the state from supernatural practices, and settled the boundary that lies between the two. They believed that not only should reason

and politics be reconciled, but also that reason should take the place of that previously occupied by the supernatural or invisible forces. This chapter, therefore, asks African journalism to define the conditions conducive to the development of the aspirations of the African people. It also explains what should be the structure and functions of African journalism and the source of inspiration/or mandate of the African journalist. Still, given the 54 countries making up the African continent, there is fear of obstacles to establishing common ethics and regulations for African journalism. The argument will be made that traditional, basic journalism ethics and regulations are the same everywhere. The only problem here is how African journalists can reconcile this with their local culture, and especially so, as press freedom clashes with African tradition—cases will be cited to demonstrate this. The strength of this solution lies in Africa's transition to modernization of its values. The chapter also explains that the variables from the African cultural environment and the external world can impact on African journalism, and African journalists need to control them as the African culture becomes opened through the African Renaissance process. The expertise needed by the African journalist is offered in the form of prescriptions in this chapter. The reality of the problems confronting Africa today is informed by its culture and history.

But this can come about only when the African journalist reconnects to the African community through the journalistic model of civic or public journalism that, among other things, de-emphasizes the elitist nature of journalism and connect with communities to understand their problems. By this process, the African journalist is enabled to go into the heart of the “layer of mud” that has been preventing Africa from moving into

modernization, by which is meant the African living the good life, freed from unnecessary cultural burdens.

The chapter also explores how African journalism should be redefined in the African Renaissance ethos to make it conducive to the development aspirations of the African peoples. This is demonstrated in the suggested prescriptions. The prescriptions recognize that Africa cannot be completely isolated from the rest of the world and the on-going development of a global culture. I suggest policies such as educating African journalists about the African culture and history, and explain why African journalists should incorporate the renaissance process in their editorial operations. What should be the structure and functions of African journalism in this regard? What shall be the source of the mandate of African journalism? And given that Africa comprises several states—54 in all—with differing historical experiences and resource endowment, what are the likely obstacles in establishing common ethics and regulations for African journalism?

Finally, I lay emphasis on African journalists rather the African mass media structures such as the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation or Nigeria's *Daily Times* newspaper throughout this chapter because I am convinced African journalists are the key agency to be retooled under the *New African Journalism* to spark the necessary changes needed in the African Renaissance process. Having been repackaged, the African journalist (including freelance ones) can then move on to the various mass media institutions (including public relations practitioners and press officers) to bring the changes expected to help facilitate the African Renaissance process. However, I recognize the importance

of mass media structures as the main conduits for re-defined African journalists to use to direct the African Renaissance process. Still, while the two— African journalists and the African mass media structures—are mutually inclusive, I am convinced the African journalist is the main motor to drive his/her media institutions. Hence, once again, the emphasise on the African journalist as the main agency in this chapter.

Chapter Five summarizes the main arguments offered in the entire research, the lessons to be drawn from these arguments, and offers prospects that are expected to lubricate the ethos for the African journalist and his/her institutions. One of the lessons to be learnt is that African journalists should treat culture as an issue of national interest just as they have been doing with security, politics, economics, and personalities. However, a secondary but also important aspect of this research is that it rejects ethnocentrism, the superiority of one culture over the other, in discussing Africa's culture and its progress. African culture is not considered to be superior to other cultures or vice versa. The reason is not to encourage a boom in cultural relativity and cultural pluralism but to encourage the African journalist to treat the culture objectively just as a medical surgeon operates on a disease. Thus, African culture is viewed at this stage as a global sub-culture which, though largely distinct, overlaps to some extent with the dynamics of the growing global culture. Such view of the African culture in the global arena will enable the African journalist to employ elements of global journalism—truth, fairness, objectivity, justice, human rights, equity, freedom, and so on—to help them delve into the layer of dirt within the polluted African culture that has been preventing Africa from moving into

modernization. This is the paradigmatic shift that the African journalist is to operate within the context of African Renaissance process.

CHAPTER ONE

CULTURE AND PROGRESS IN GENERAL

The introductory chapter identified the research problem, advanced a thesis statement and provided an overview of the organization of chapters. The objective of this first chapter is to explain how culture impacts on progress. The chapter examines current intellectual debate about the relationship between culture and progress. Culture is presented in its broader sense and related to a new revelation that, because of cultural differences, some countries and ethnic groups have been doing better than others. For this reason, it is important to explore whether Africa, with “54 countries, 4 racial groups, and more than 2,000 ethnic communities” (Ayitteh, 1998, p.xii), has one common culture, albeit diversified, as the basis for its renaissance. Looking at culture helps to explain why African culture, which was polluted and suppressed during the eras of captive slavery and colonialism, must be revived under the African Renaissance process to spark progressive goals grounded in African values.

Culture invokes different images and meanings and of recent times is coming increasingly in the forefront of discussions in relation to progress. Culture is a controversial subject since it borders on ego and identity. Some have argued that the meaning of culture is tainted with confusion, while others hold the view that it can be clearly defined. For example, some argue there is confusion among anthropologists about what culture really means while others argue that culture commonly refers to the intellectual and artistic products of a society which they term “high culture”.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defines culture as “thick description,” meaning the total way of life of a society— values, worldviews, practices, symbols, institutions, and human relationships. However, others argue that culture is a community’s specific ideas about what is true, good, bad, beautiful, and efficient (Harrison & Huntington, 2000,p.xv; Harris, 1999,p.19; Shweder, 2000,p.163).

As indicated earlier, confusion surrounds the meaning of culture because anthropologists cannot agree on a definition of culture. Some believe culture is made up of values, motives, moral-ethical regulations and meanings that underlie the institutions of society; while others see culture as only learned ways of thinking and behaving. Differences in emphasis deepen the confusion. Some emphasize genetic influences; others emphasize thoughts and ideas, while others still focus on culture as a product of thoughts and ideas in combination with activities such as economic production. Despite these arguments, some admit that culture is shaped by socially mediated learning and constitutes different ways of life.

In the African context then, culture embodies some crises about its meaning when related to the search for progress under the auspices of the African Renaissance. The various African ethnic groups’ socially learned ways of living are found in their communities. Culture embraces all aspects of African life, including moral-ethical regulations and meaning, thought and behaviour. Even the decision to act or not to act is rooted in African culture.

Different cultural views reflect the social reality. Central to the Renaissance debate is how African culture affects Africa's progress. African culture is also embedded in subjective terms such as the values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, traditions, knowledge, laws, regulations and moral assumptions and practices that are common within African society. Subjectivity hinders as well as promotes economic development, material well-being, peace, and overall social progress. How, then, does Africa's culture provide reality perception, standards of evaluation, conditions of inspiration, medium of communication, means of economic production, strands of stratification, and identity in today's polluted reality? Culture is some African ethnic groups' lens of perceiving and interpreting that too many twins born in a particular cycle of the year results in drought. Should the African today still think too many twin babies born in a particular season causes drought and famine or that thunder is caused by witchcraft? Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an American politician, believes it is culture, not politics, that determines a society's success. However, politics can change a culture, save it, and open up the forces of progress (Harrison and Huntington, 2000, p.xiv).

Culture has a subjective effect. It may act as an independent variable in some situations and a dependent variable in others. My research interest lies in how cultural factors promote African progress and at times obstruct it. A related inquiry is: how can political or other forces change or remove cultural obstacles to progress? Economic development can affect culture to some extent, but some cultural barriers are so strong or entrenched that economic development alone is not capable of removing them. Such obstacles require political action for their eradication. In Africa the source of such action comes

from the ruling elites, who are for now mired in the authoritarian African culture, a situation not conducive to opening up some cultural barriers for economic development. Major trauma is another agent that may affect culture. For example, the historical experiences of Germany and Japan during the Second World War transformed them from militaristic cultures to cultures of peaceful coexistence through trade with the rest of the world. Similarly, Mariono Grondona (2000, p.44-55) claims Argentina's progress toward economic reform and political stability is a result of disastrous experiences with the brutal military junta, military defeat, and hyperinflation.

The historical experience of Africa is characterized by economic, social, political, and natural disasters that stimulate or open up cultural change for better or for worse. Despite this rich history, many African elites shy away from analyzing the development problems of Africa within the context of its cultural dynamics. The reason is twofold: confusion surrounding the meaning of culture and an erroneous assumption that culture is not very important. My counterargument is that culture does make a difference—either inhibiting or promoting progress. However, the African elite tends to forget that individuals are products of the culture into which they are socialized.

When individuals internalize culture, it becomes part of their self or the ego, and the standard by which they are measured and compared. In this way, culture materializes as the lens and yardstick by which development is viewed and measured. Culture, expressing itself as inner values and attitudes that guide society, frightens scholars of development (Landes, 2000, p.2). That African culture and development are inseparable

must be acknowledged before Africa can move forward. In my view, there is no other way.

Using culture to explain Africa's weakness has been called ethnocentric. Some social scientists have gone further to label African culture as mechanical, primitive, uncivilized, or pagan (Abercrombie et al, 1984,p. 79). No wonder African culture was suppressed during colonialism, which imposed on Africans a colonialist culture with its own concept of God and progress and rule of law. Thus, colonialism was a mechanism for stifling the inner growth of the African culture. The global environmental campaigns to balance science with nature lay bare the erroneous labeling by the colonialist of the African's value of balance between the physical and the metaphysical as "primitive." Consequently, there is some reluctance, suspicion and fear in using culture as an explanatory factor in African affairs by scholars within and outside Africa. Orlando Patterson, an African-American, argues plausibly that fear discourages using culture to explain the life of some people who produce culture (Patterson, 2000, p.202-218).

However, the above attitude is fading and allowing cultural relativity and pluralism to gain ground. Narrow Eurocentric views about culture and progress are also fading along with its Western-style lumping of humans into one closet. There is increasing need to explain events in terms of a group's culture suffused with enabling elements of global culture such as human rights, equity, freedom, justice, rule of law, democracy, accountability, mass communication, science and technology. The colonialists cannot shoulder all the blame; Africa must also take a good look in the mirror of its

development. Daniel Etounga-Manguelle, a Cameroonian development expert, supports this view. He asks: “Does Africa Need a Cultural Adjustment Program?” African culture must be questioned today in much the same way as economics, politics, and personalities were questioned in the past. African culture should now be discussed with open-mindedness without fear of accusation of ethnocentrism (the claim of superiority of one culture over another). Questioning African culture requires establishing the existence of a common or overarching culture despite sub-cultural variations.

DOES AFRICA HAVE ONE CULTURE?

The African Renaissance recognizes one African culture as the basis for Africa’s progress. Though by no means different, Africans share similar population structures, levels of technological development and stocks of material wealth. To see African culture as one whole forest, I ignore the trees differentiated by various regions, societies, and countries as a way of grasping the commonality of the African culture. From this premise, I attempt to explore the notion of an existence of one African culture despite the existence of several sub-cultures. The creation of several African nation-states by the colonialists calls for the revelation of one African culture as the basis of African integration, and therefore, its progress. The degree of social capital, the openness of its culture, and the promotion of self-expression predicate a society’s progress on the nature of its citizen’s inner values and attitudes that, in turn, is measured. Africa’s subservience to its European masters ensured incremental societal progress.

Western scholars first examined African culture. These Western scholars did not understand the unity of African culture. It was common for them and other writers to

focus on the diversity of the African culture without much concern for the common characteristics. They touted Western and Asian cultures as the only cultural phenomena in world history and doubted the common cultural understanding of the African people. Molefi Kete Asante and Karimu Welsh Asante (1985) point to recent interest in African culture by Senegal's Chiekh Anta Diop (*African Origin of Civilization (1971)* and *Cultural Unity of Black Africa*). Diop has turned this Western perception upside down and opened the way for the promotion of one African culture despite diversity.

African culture has been described as one tree with many branches, characterized by specific responses to the events of history, struggles, and the environment. Some of these commonalities are food such as is the preparation of cassava, languages, puberty rites, the history of the Arab and trans-Atlantic slave trades, and struggles for independence from the colonialists. Undoubtedly, after the birth of Christianity in European countries such as England, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Norway, France, Italy, and Belgium, one European culture existed although it varied in many aspects. Indeed, the existence of different sub-cultures within an overarching culture has been the norm in most societies, and Africa is no exception. What matters is the recognition of the common threads that bind the sub-cultures. Although Africa comprises about 2,000 sub-groups, the common threads are so many and so strong that Africa can, indeed, be said to have one culture. Carleton University's Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle, a Pan-African political scientist, explains that the puberty rites of the Swazi in distant Swaziland of southern Africa are the same as those of the 56 ethnic groups in his native Ghana in West Africa (Ottawa, 6 March, 2001). Much

African culture and its unity are similar to Europe's experience. It is within this same context and similar experiences that Asante and Asante explain:

Asante, Yoruba, Mandinka are also one, though different in the historical sense. When we speak of unity in Africa, we are speaking of the commonalities among the people. Thus, a Yoruba who is different from an Ibo or Asante still shares more in common culture with them than with Thais or Norwegians. To the degree that the material conditions influence the choices people make, we Africans share similarities in behavior, perceptions, and technologies. (Asante and Asante, p.x)

Despite differences in perceptions, African ethnic groups relate in homogeneity despite heterogeneity. While there is no African country with a totally homogenous culture, the rudiments of African sub-cultures are practically the same.

On a much broader level, the minor differences in African sub-cultures may be explained in terms of geography and its impact on ethnic group history. A group living near the ocean or mountains will have water or mountain motifs in its sub-culture. However, the foregoing does not mean that an African group cannot relate to other African groups. The Fula, whose culture is influenced by rearing cows, is no more or less than an Asante cocoa farmer. Some particulars are related to the history of struggles experienced by each African group that lead to minor variation within the common African culture over time. Thus, the existence of shared values, thoughts, behaviours, attitudes, motivations, and institutions common to the over 2,000 ethnic groups, makes Africa's sub-cultural diversity very real. A parallel can be drawn to Britain where despite its Scottish, Welsh,

and Northern Irish subcultures, the existence of a common British culture cannot be denied.

Food habits, morals and customs, and the structure of languages or dialects substantiate the existence of one African culture. Constancio Nakuma of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a teacher of Romance and Asian Languages at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, explains that the homogeneity of African culture is evidenced in Africa's language as a vehicle and product of the culture of its speakers. African languages appear to converge rather than diverge (ibid). Citing Cheikh Anta Diop, the Senegalese Egyptologist who compiled more than 200 pages of cognates, he advances extensive linguistic and anthropological evidence in support of the linguistic unity of Africa despite the cultural upheavals in African history. A survey by the Congolese linguist, Theophile Obenga, supports Nakuma's theory that almost all African native languages tend to express the concepts of "fearing" and "respecting" by the same verb (www.web.ytk.edu. accessed 2001/01/25, p.1-6).

The arguments advanced above lead to the conclusion that it is appropriate to analyze the role of the African journalist in the African Renaissance process within the context of a common African culture. Indeed, the relationship between African culture and progress has been of much intellectual debate.

All said and done, the reason for proving the existence of one common but diversified African culture is that Africa can only, among others, have the power to fight for fair terms of trade and minimize its position today as a price-taker only when it has one voice.

This one voice can be found inside the African culture. But before this one African voice can be proved beyond all reasonable doubt and touted as a powerful tool for Africa's progress, the African mass media have to educate and raise Africans consciousness about how common, though diversified, their culture is. It is then that Africa's cultural unity can be used to overcome the problem of unfavourable terms of trade and price-taking, and truly integrate the African people for progress.

FROM CULTURE TO DEVELOPMENT: SOME HISTORICAL FACTS AND THE INTELLECTUAL DEBATE

The importance of culture in the development process is exemplified by the comparative historical experience of Ghana and Malaysia. In the first quarter of 1960s, the structure of economies of Ghana and Malaysia were similar. Both countries were similarly structured in terms of primary exports, manufacturing, services, huge primary product exports, and comparable levels of Gross National Product (GNP) per capita. However, Malaysia produced some few manufactured goods. There were comparable levels of economic aid to the two countries. Forty years later, Malaysia has emerged as an economic powerhouse in Southeast Asia while Ghana has not in West Africa. Malaysia's average annual growth is 5.7 per cent (1985-1994) while Ghana's was 1.4 per cent in the same period. Malaysia's poverty rate of 26 per cent is one of the lowest among all Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Additionally, Malaysia is entrenching democratic reform. Ghana, on the other hand, remains almost the same as it was in 1960. No such changes had occurred in Ghana, whose per capita GNP of \$430 (1994) is nine times lower than that of Malaysia's \$3520 (Todaro, 1997,p.332-334 & p.405-406).

How does one explain these extraordinary differences? While surely many factors play a role, culture seems to be the most potent explanatory factor. Culturally, Malaysia valued thrift, investment, hard work, education, organization, and discipline. Ghanaians had different cultural values. The original Ghanaian culture, and variants of African culture, embraced values similar to Malaysia's, but the culture became polluted through the combined eras of slavery and colonialism with their attendant breakdown of discipline. Because the slave trade and the colonial conquest were characterized by plunder and looting of property that had been acquired for centuries, it became wise for Ghanaians to spend what they had acquired before any looter from outside intervened. This pervaded, polluted, and turned the Ghanaian culture into a culture of fatalism with affluence. Fatalism entered the fabric of the Ghanaian culture to such an extent that saving for investment purposes almost vanished. Under such distorted cultural circumstances, growth in GNP per capita was not adequate in supporting the development process. In a nutshell, the comparative experience of Ghana and Malaysia, holding their monetization and commodification of their economies in the international system constant, demonstrates that culture enables as well as defines a society's progress rate.

Emerging Ghanaian entrepreneurs are seeing the impact of their culture on progress. In an interview with Kofi Sintim, 41, president of the Montreal- based Premex Courier Inc, he expressed the view that the African businessman or woman has the habit of "living big and thinking small," which emanates from the culture. That is, the culture of ostentatious life of the African stifles his/her business expansion. Sintim, whose company employs 60 people, recognizes that the African culture has much to do with progress as

anything else. He gave the example of the African culture of PHD, “pull him down,” syndrome.¹ “If you pull one down, you pull yourself down also. One wastes one’s energy by pulling another down which energy could have been used to uplift oneself,” he argued. That is a serious cultural problem in Africa, and which over the years have been passed from one generation to another, a situation, as in genetics and genes, called *meme* by anthropologists, in which cultural units through propagating thoughts leap from mind to mind and, in today’s interactive African culture, are transmitted from one generation to another. Sintim, who was honoured on May 12 this year as Business Person of the Year by the Montreal Association of Black Persons and Professionals, told a story of his recent visit to Ghana. The roads are potholed and the economy bad yet he found many more expensive cars there than Canada, which is richer and has better infrastructure than Ghana. The two approaches to life and business are cultural.

Why Ghana, and the whole of Africa, came to have weak cultural values is partly explained by history and partly by groups’ culture.² For 400 years Europeans and Arabs’ use of the slave trade disturbed and reversed Africa’s galloping development. In the process, Africa’s cultural health and progress was undermined. Colonialism that followed almost immediately after the slave trade imposed an alien definition of God, of progress,

¹ Africans are increasingly coming to terms that the PHD, “pull him down,” syndrome is responsible for many of their crises. PHD weakens trust, and implicates in progress as people attempt to hinder each other’s progress. Hence, the boom in *juju/marabou* occult practices. For this reason, there is open discussion of this negative attitude among Africans today as they open up to global prosperity through international communication system and assess how well others are doing.

² For long time, many an African elite has railed against the colonialists, real or imagined, as the cause of Africa’s predicament. While this is understandable, such excessive blaming reveals that the culture has not been appropriated to use its historical forces for positive national development. The excessive external blaming of Africa’s predicament can be seen in the African attitude of blaming his/her predicaments on witchcraft and other supernatural forces, without looking within himself/herself for why such troubles and, therefore, solutions to solve the problems.

and rule of law. What values and achievements were obtained in Africa by 1500 before the coming of slavery and colonialism? Africa was the home of empires (Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Nubia, Zimbabwe empires) and universities (Luxor and Timbuktu), and achieved spectacular advances in metallurgy, architecture, science and technology, art, medicine and astronomy. The African society was free of alcohol and prostitution. Clean cities such as Benin and Mombassa existed. African sages were well versed in divine knowledge and in the need for balance between the physical and the metaphysical. Writing, including glyph systems, was invented and used in Africa as evidence from the historical records of Egypt and Meroe. Added to these are the substantiate scripts of the Mende (Sierra Leone), Loma (Liberia), Bamum (Cameroon), Nsibidi (Efik/Ibo) and Mum (*New Africa*, April, 2001,p.21). Some African Kings including Mansa Musa created stable and centralized administrations of government with responsible ministries similar to modern government. A sound medium of exchange promoted trade while an organized army provided security, a disciplined judiciary ensured the rule of law, and a university provided the education necessary for progress and economic prosperity (Shinnie, 1995).

Mombasa, a city on the eastern seaboard of Africa, succinctly captures the relationship between culture and progress in Africa before the dawn of the slave trade and colonialism. Margaret Shinnie, in *Ancient African Kingdoms* (1965, p.108-109), cites the description of Mombasa in the 16th century by Portuguese traveler Duarte Barbosa, who gave his impression of that city:

“There is a city of Moors called Mombaca, very large and beautiful, and built of high and handsome houses of stones and whitewash, and with very good streets..It has its own king, himself a Moor. The people are of dusky white and brown complexities, like wise the women who are bravely attired in silk and gold in abundance. It is a town of great trade, and has a good harbour, where there are always many ships, both of those that sail for Sofala, and those that come from Cambay in India and Malindi, and others which sail to the islands of Zanzibar, Mafia, and Pemba, which will be spoken of further on. This Mombaca is a country well supplied with plenty of food. Here are found very fine sheep, which have round tails, and many cows, chickens, and very large goats, much rice, and millet, and plenty of oranges, sweet and bitter, and lemons, limes, pomegranates, Indian figs and all sorts of vegetables, and good water.

The arguments and evidence advanced show that Africa’s achievements before slavery and colonialism could not have been achieved without the existence of an enabling culture – African culture in its pure and indigenous form, despite Africa’s own internal hiccups. Some African scholars are now paying attention to this reality, when for long they steered clear of the implications of African culture on progress. These scholars include Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle (2000), Daniel Etounga-Manguelle (2000), N. Barney Pityana (1999), Lesiba Teffo (1999), and George Ayitteh (1998). Also, African youth, workers, and peasants have recognized the link between culture and progress. On 25-27 April, 2000, seventy-one youth from 18 African countries met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to deliberate upon how some traditional practices adversely affect the health of African women and female-children. Representatives from the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ministries attended

the three-day forum. Confirmation was given that, in conformity with social dictates, traditions, and sanctions, over 100 million African women and female-children fall victim to female genital mutilation. The practice results in high maternal and infant mortality and makes females vulnerable to the deadly HIV/AIDS disease (*Addis Tribune*, April, 21, 2000,p.1; www.africanews.org.accessed: 2000/04/25).³

Personalities and institutions whose policies affect Africa's progress are rethinking the culture-progress issue. Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that previously had not considered the impact of culture on progress, are now rethinking their approach. Alan Greenspan, chair of the United States' Federal Reserve Board had earlier been skeptical about the link between culture and progress. After pondering over post-Soviet Russia's experience in the wake of economic disaster, Greenspan concludes it is not capitalism per se but culture that shapes progress (Huntington, 2000,p.xxiv-xxv).

In *Culture Makes All the Difference*, David Landes (2000, p.2-14) expands Alan Greenspan's thoughts, using Max Weber's observation that the history of economic development reveals that culture makes a difference. Peoples' values and attitudes easily reveal their individual/group levels of progress. Within the 2,000 African ethnic groups, some exhibit either weak or strong sub-cultural practices that inhibit, or conversely, promote progress. In Sierra Leone, the Fula ethnic group's strong work ethic is linked to

³ Despite scientific evidence of psychological and physical harm to African women involved in female genital mutilation, some African traditionalists are resisting attempts to ban it. Not all African ethnic groups are involved in this practice. It is practiced more in the Islamic areas of Africa, which came about during the Arab slave trade and its ensuing *jihad*s, holy wars.

their rapid progress. Gauging Africa's level of progress from its cultural perspective, according to Landes, will help Africans better understand what is obstructing them. Landes advises us to examine the relative progress or success of expatriate minorities in larger societies; for example, the Lebanese in West Africa, the Chinese in East Africa and Southeast Asia, the Indians in East Africa, and the historical experience of Jews and Calvinists throughout much of Europe. Their differences in achievement compared to the larger societies in which they live or lived is driven by their inner values, motivations and attitudes that comprise their sub-cultures.

The increasing awareness of ethical-moral regulations, values and attitudes in relation to progress means that the constantly blaming of outside forces for Africa's predicament needs reconsideration. Other developing countries such as those in Latin America have long concluded that culture has to be factored into the interpretation or explanation of political and economic progress. Ex-colonies blamed their unhealthy economic situation on dependency theory that saw structures created by their former colonial masters linked to global capitalism. Latin American scholar and later President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, is a proponent of dependency theory. Now dependency theorists look to the culture-progress theory for explanation. Some Latin American and African scholars side with Huntington (2000, p.xiv), who agrees with Harrison that culture has been a key obstacle to development. Earlier, Latin American intellectuals including economists had disagreed with Harrison, but eventually realized the validity of Harrison's argument. Dependency theory's flaw was that it shifted too much blame to outsiders, and in so

doing, promoted developmental impotence within and covered up the cultural inhibitions that prevent progress.

Caught in a state of confusion by both their history and the pollutants within their culture, Africans have for long placed exclusive blame for their predicament on outsiders, without looking within their own culture for what is obstructing them. They have been blind to the inhibiting aspects of their culture. Unlike Africans, the Japanese placed limits on blaming outsiders for their problems and proceeded to find solutions. As Landes explains, “When people realize that things are going wrong, there are two questions they can ask. One is, ‘What did we do wrong?’ and the other is, ‘Who did this to us?’ The latter leads to “conspiracy theories and paranoia” the former leads to another: “How do we put it right?”” In the second half of the 20th century Latin America and Africa chose excessive conspiracy theories and paranoia, while Japan reasoned, “How do we put it right?” The success of Japan sends the message to Africans to concentrate on how to put things right by removing the obstacles inherited from the past (ibid).

Western capitalist development cannot be explained fully without its cultural/spiritual origin —values and attitudes that spark progress. Max Weber’s influential and thoughtful essay “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” better explains the link between culture and progress. Weber, a German, observed that Protestantism, especially its Calvinist branch, is the motor behind modern industrial capitalism. Protestantism defined and sanctioned an ethic of everyday behavior that flowered into economic success and constituted the basis of capitalist development. This moral re-arming created a healthy

atmosphere for rational, proper thought, behavior, and discipline. The outcome of such a belief system was a secular code of conduct exemplified through hard work, honesty, seriousness, discipline, and the thrifty use of money and time. A similar work ethic existed in African culture and was part of the African virtue of *ubuntu* (brotherhood and unity of survival that has been central to African communities) in pre-slave trade and pre-colonial times. This ethic was suppressed during the eras of slavery and colonialism and the behavior of Africa's confused elites worsened an already untenable situation. How can the original African ethic be revived to spark progress driven by values and attitudes free from the pollutants within African cultural practices today? The answer is located within the African culture itself and not outside. Revival of such ethic has to be reconciled with the global culture in such a manner as to prevent cultural pollution while simultaneously enabling development. In the African cultural context, profit motive with its associated prestige comes in the form of desire for more acquisition and accompanying ostentatious life.

The profit motive of Protestantism gave birth to the West's capitalist progress, but has not done so in Africa. Why? In the West, unlike Africa, entrepreneurial acquisitive motives did not end with ostentatious consumption, for the desire to consume was disciplined. The Calvinist culture idealized successful acquisition in business as a potential sign of grace, but that philosophy also discouraged consumption and ostentation as evils of indulgence. (Mazrui, 1980, p.60)

An African version of the Protestant Ethic can be found in *ubuntu* that can be applied to Africa's management practices. Lesiba Teffo (1999, p. 164-165), a special adviser to South Africa's Minister of Education, argues that *Ubuntu* is a theory of business co-operation that promotes creativity, productivity, and respect for one another. *Ubuntu* empowers Africans to love and respect one another. In addition, *ubuntu* management strategy seeks to encourage and empower African business organizations to develop an ethic of African identity and to use it to raise inner strength to seize external opportunities. It may be viewed as a mixture of Calvinist and Japanese approaches to management or a mixture of African and Western cultures. Either way, the best aspects of two cultures conducive to development may be kept, and the rest discarded. When accomplished, the largely Eurocentric management system dominant in Africa today will give way to an *ubuntu* management style that is more balanced and enabling. Frances Fukuyama calls that kind of enabling social disposition 'social capital'. He defines it as "an instantiated set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits them to cooperate with one another." Trust is established and group members expect one another and behave "reliably and honestly." In this way, trust acts like the motor that makes any group or organization run more efficiently (Fukuyama, 2000, p.98-99).

However, values and norms shared by a group may not necessarily produce the kind of social capital conducive to progress. For example, due to the pollution of African culture, African ethnic groups have developed a negative social capital of general mistrust hovering on suppressed strong norms. Norms and other shared values that make up the

conducive social capital must include virtues like telling the truth, trust, respect, responsibility, meeting obligations, and reciprocity that are embedded in the unpolluted African culture. This doesn't mean the pre-slave trade and pre-colonial pure Africa had no vices, there were vices but not so much as the slave trade forced Africans to delve fully into the supernatural against slave trade raiders and when also colonialism brought European vices such as alcohol consumption and prostitution to Africa. Africa's submission to the irrational interpretation of most things from the supernatural, for example, does not create the enabling radius of trust needed for progress. What that breeds are attitude of mistrust, suspicion, reliance on the influence of supernatural forces, and consequently breakdown of the norms of *ubuntu*. For example, some Africans still think that HIV/AIDS is caused by the curse of witchcraft. In Ghana, health workers have launched campaigns against the belief that witchcraft is the root cause of most diseases (Ghanaweb.com: accessed: 2001/03/21).

In the polluted African culture⁴ of today, authoritarianism is embedded in families, clans, villages, schools, and churches. A culture of fear, closeness, and unnecessary tension has developed that undermines the level of trust necessary for progress. Families are tight and strong, but they find it difficult to trust strangers. Some of these attitudes are rooted in the colonial past because the colonialists created African nation-states without the consent and participation of the African people, public honesty and cooperation were undermined. The resulting African society is characterized by tribalism, nepotism,

⁴ By polluted African culture, I do not necessarily mean that colonialism and other external influences are the only be-all and end-all of Africa's culture pollution but that over the years Africans have not been able to enhance the good aspects in their culture and through their own attitudes, such as the PHD syndrome, have polluted their culture. So the cultural pollution is as internally caused as it is externally caused.

favouritism, suspicion, mistrust, and corruption. These, in turn, have led to coups, civil wars and social paralysis. However, the present reality can be corrected. This is precisely the aim of the African Renaissance process. It calls for removing the aspects of culture that hinder progress.

Ronald Inglehart's *Culture and Democracy* (2000, p.82-84) provides insight into other aspects of Africa's culture and progress in a modern context. While worldviews of groups may differ culturally, factor analysis performed by Inglehart reveals two main dimensions that tap into variables and cross-cultural variations in the level of progress. The dimensions are: 1. The different orientations of traditional-developing versus secular-rational; 2. The survival versus self-expression values based on World Values Surveys of 1990-1991. The survey examined changes over time along these dimensions of basic values, orientations and progress. The traditional pole hinges on religion, rigid standards, and traditional family values. Traditional societies favour large families, reject divorce and take a pro-life stance on abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. They gravitate toward social conformity rather than individualistic achievement, favour consensus and co-operation rather than open political conflict, support deference to authority, and possess high national pride. Secular-rational societies' values are opposite.

Some of the differing values between the West and Africa may be regarded as consequence of the West's moral decay spilling over to Africa and partially contributing to Africa's cultural crises by suppressing or polluting African value system. Colonialism obviously did not operate within the context of, or for the benefit of, African culture.

Rather, it polluted African culture and stifled Africa's secular-rational growth. The African Renaissance hopes to reverse the cultural pollution and encourage African traditional values such as *ubuntu*.

Inglehart argues that societies such as Africa that have entrenched survival values reflect relatively low levels of well-being as Africa's worsening poverty situation demonstrates; poor health as Africa's HIV/AIDS pandemic threatens its existence; low interpersonal trust as the African's belief in the supernatural creates an atmosphere of such since there is suspicion and counter-suspicion by individuals and groups; intolerance toward out groups, a situation carried over by some of the inter-tribal warfares and the colonialists divide-and-rule policies on Africa; low support for gender equality informed by the patriarchic African culture; an emphasise on non-materialist values seen in Africa's tradition of balance between the physical and metaphysical as the basis of life; less faith in science and technology as seen in the traditional nature of African culture; lower environmental activism since the African culture treats the environment as part and parcel of existence; and are relatively favorable to authoritarian government, informed by Africa's authoritarian culture of gerontology, a situation in which only older or aged people hold sway in matters of public and private decision-making. On the other hand, societies emphasizing self-expression have opposite values. Societies possessing self-expression values are more open and more likely to have stable democracies than survival societies such as Africa's. (ibid).

In summary, the relationship between culture and progress is becoming increasingly relevant today as Max Weber observed long ago. The achievements of earlier African empires prove the positive relationship between culture and progress. The slave trade and colonialism inhibited Africa's inner growth, imposing different cultural values: colonialism's own notion of God and progress and the rule of law. Now post-slave trade and post-colonial Africa with its crises looming, must revive its frozen cultural universe to reposition itself in a new global cultural system to ensure its progress. This means African culture, despite its seeming totality, is a dynamic process which flows for progress, meandering through selective social learning process, incorporating and discarding values along the way. It is the understanding of this cultural process that will see Africa reposition itself in the new global cultural system to ensure its progress. Africa needs only to look to the progress of some states and ethnic groups to draw its inspiration. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has said, "Interference has brought stagnation and regression. The more orphaned we are, the better for Africa. We will have to rely on ourselves. We will have to go back to the year 1500, where we left off building an economy integrated in itself, able to produce its own food, its own tools, its own weapons" (*Time*, September 7, 1992, p.39). The Africa of that era may no longer be in existence but such knowledge can be a basis for positive action under the African Renaissance process.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AFRICAN DEBATE ABOUT CULTURE AND PROGRESS

Chapter One explained how the relationship between culture and progress is becoming increasingly relevant and why some states and ethnic groups are progressing more rapidly than others. It is not enough to be aware of Africa's battered past. Knowledge of Africa's past problems alone is inadequate for the resolution of the complex problems it faces today. Some African intellectuals continue to debate the relationship between African culture and progress on the continent. This chapter analyzes the ongoing debate and argues, that for Africa to develop successfully, certain pollutants inherited from the eras of slave trade and colonialism must disappear. Additionally, Africa's present reality has to be reconciled with the enabling aspects of global culture.

African culture is being discussed today more than ever. Its positive and negative aspects are being scrutinized to explain their impact on African development.⁵ Despite suspicion of Western cultural imperialism by some Africans, the idea of universality of values is taking root. The suspicion of progress by those committed to cultural relativism and respect for each culture's goals and ethics is that the West is trying to impose its culture on others including Africa. Cultural relativists and cultural pluralists argue that the West

⁵ A clear case of this is the Rain Queen Modjadji V of the Bolobedu tribe in South Africa, who died on 28 June, 2001. Through the art of necromancy handed over from generations, for decades, she used her ancestral powers to predict rain in the entire southern Africa and the South African Weather Bureau in Pretoria granted her some degree of recognition. Over the years her mysterious powers eroded, tellingly during the Black majority rule in South Africa, in terms of debunking any ethnocentrism, when progressive water policies of African National Congress (ANC) government gave millions access to water as solution to perennial droughts, which was fatal to belief in Queen Modjadji's powers. She was still carrying her basic duties but the weather forecast was available on television for everyone, thus demystifying her powers and freeing the people from any excessive belief in some mysterious powers predicting rain. Here is a case whereby an African value has not been totally destroyed or branded 'primitive' but enhanced,

has no business criticizing African traditional practices such as female genital mutilation. “But after half a century of communication revolution, progress in the Western sense has become virtually a universal aspiration. The idea of progress—of a longer, healthier, less burdensome, more fulfilling life—is not confined to the West” (Harrison, 2000, p.xxvi). However, there has been lack of discussion on African values in this era of modernization. Modernization does not mean Westernization as some African elites and anti-imperialists believed years ago. No society has divine control over modernization. The issue of modernization forms part of the current discussion on African culture and progress within the process of African Renaissance. The new African thinking increasingly recognizes the power of culture in Africa’s progress.

Though controversial, a component of African culture that tends to stifle choice in the modern setting is the extended-family system. Dan Otchere, a Ghanaian-Canadian economist at Concordia University in Montreal, in an interview with me explained the correlation between economic development and culture and argued that the extended-family system is crippling Africa’s progress. Otchere advised policy planners to take a critical look at African culture as a factor in explaining economic development, or the lack thereof. Africa’s inability to turn economic growth into economic development results not only from inflation and increasing population growth, but also from cultural problems. Most of Africa’s cultural troubles are grounded in the existence of the extended family system as the foundation of African society. The African family system creates a network of obligations that go beyond the Western concept of the nuclear family—mother, father, and their children—to include grandparents, aunts and uncles,

despite reduced dignity of the Rain Queen by modern science and technology. (*The Ottawa Citizen*, June

cousins and in-laws. According to Otchere, the African extended family system has social benefits, but in terms of economic growth leads to the disturbing dependence on a single breadwinner supporting many relatives. The breadwinner is drained of his savings potential capital that could have gone into the banking system to generate economic growth. Consequently, financial support goes into consumption creating a dearth of investment in Africa. “As a result of the extended-family system, the tax base of the society becomes smaller...this puts a burden on governments, causing deficits, inflation and currency devaluation,” argues Otchere. Africa need take a non-sentimental look at its extended-family system. However, Otchere’s view appears very much flawed. He certainly does not know much about taxation in Africa. African governments tax individuals, not extended families. Hence, the tax base is not affected by the extended family system.

While praising some aspects of African culture, such as arts and music, Otchere argues that some aspects of African culture can spark development, but the negative aspects outweigh the positive. There is always a net effect. “And that is what I am interested in.” How can African culture be changed? Otchere argues African societies are in a “dual phase” of extended family and nuclear family values. The “dual phase” is reflected by the co-existence of two economies in Africa – modern and traditional – and evolution will come through education, globalization, and the reconciliation with other cultures. (Interviewed by me in 1998 and other reports). Otchere’s assertion is too general. However, Otchere failed to explain how the slave trade and colonialism weakened Africa’s economies to the extent that the extended family system has become the

supportive social welfare pillar in the absence of the state's inability to provide welfare for the aged, unemployed, and the sick. The extended family system also may stifle investments but it holds the social fabric together. It is through the extended family system that most human capital is created in Africa. Human beings create wealth not the reverse. The extended family creates human capital making it possible to translate labour power into wealth, but the institutions for transforming the acquired labour power into wealth are scarce. This reality is not the fault of the extended family per se but the inherited system. Africa abounds in human capital. What is required is organizing capacity and appropriate infrastructure to realize Africa's potential. This will come from the state. The potential of the African state at this function is rooted in African culture as the shaper of social welfare policies. Otchere, therefore, looks at the African extended family system within an unAfrican lens.

A cover story of *Time* magazine (September 7, 1992, No. 36) is captioned "The Agony of Africa," with a picture of a malnourished African child crying. The story is about Africa's questionable progress and its traditional practices. Using the World Bank's 1989 report entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* as the basis of analysis, the story assesses the free fall of Africa from various angles—agricultural programmes, misplaced priorities, unrealistic economic policies, the low degree of financial discipline, industrial planning, and socio-cultural factors. In that story Ismail Serageldin, director of the technical department at the World Bank, draws a graph depicting the socio-cultural practices stifling Africa's progress. The vertical *y-axis* represents bonding, the ties that bond a society. The horizontal *x-axis* represents options

and opportunities, signifying freedom. All societies make a trade-off, which is represented by an oblique line angling up between the x and y coordinates. According to Serageldin, “Someone who opts for traditional social bonds loses opportunities, but someone who chooses total freedom risks losing the family and social ties that give his life meaning” (*Time*, 1992, p.37-38).

The developed, industrial countries such as Canada rank high on options and opportunity, but low on traditional bonds. Africa and other traditional societies are rated strong on bonding but low on opportunities and options. “We have visions of reality that are different...Bonding, imposed on a modern, institutional structure, becomes nepotism.” According to Serageldin, this is fundamentally the problem of the universal African practice. He argues that the worst outcome is to have none of these: “If we trade bonds for options but do not succeed economically, we risk catastrophe.” Forty years after independence from colonial rule many African social ties still exist. While Africa’s traditional bonding is necessary as a facilitator of social capital, it needs to be refined to meet the new challenges confronting Africa. This means transforming the strong traditional bonds into opportunities and options. Press images of famine and slaughter must give way to positive achievements and values within Africa have to promote a dynamic mental mood conducive to development.

What are the indigenous positive cultural values that need to be recycled as solution or therapy to deal with Africa’s crises in the new millennium? Pitika Ntuli, a senior fellow of the Pretoria branch of the African Renaissance Institute, argued in a speech he

delivered in Ottawa, Canada, during the 80th birthday celebration of Nelson Mandela, that:

Africa is caught in a spiral and vortex of violence; military take-over, crime, corruption and rapid spread of HIV/AIDS virus. To reverse this tide of debilitation and to usher in a spirit of hope and development requires us to rethink roles and models of behaviour and commitment anew. For this to succeed, a vigorous African Renaissance campaign must be pursued. We must retrace our steps in a search for earlier models, as elaborated upon above, that worked, and made us a proud people. We need to combine the results of our findings with the tools acquired from our western training and lessons from the East in order to fashion answers to our current challenges.

Ntuli uses the analogy of the umbilical cord to illustrate how the severing of Africa's cultural umbilical cord through colonialism and the behaviour of the African elite thereafter created imbalances in Africa. It is the attempt to correct these imbalances that prompted the African Renaissance. Referring to his native Mpumalanga province, South Africa, he explained that on entering a village, one is asked where his/her umbilical cord is buried, or is situated (*Inkaba yakho ikuphi?*). The umbilical cord is understood symbolically as "one's centredness. It is the passage of sustenance." The umbilical cord is always buried where it drops and a tree is planted there. These two acts--the planting of an umbilical cord and a tree--symbolize both the earth feeding us, and our duty to replenish the earth with our umbilical cords. To plant a tree is to create a link between one's ethnic group and the plant world, so that one is linked to nature. Again, the African's inter-connectedness, inter-relatedness, and inter-dependence of all phenomena, is revealed. These links are pre-requisites for a stable, harmonious and eco-viable world.

"A person is a person because of other people" or "I am because of We are", according to Ntuli (Ntuli, 30/1/2000). African Renaissance will be achieved by looking at the implication of creating such an African eco-viable world informed by African culture. Ntuli's view expresses *Ubuntu*, the kernel of the African Renaissance short of which only "self-seekers and the greedy will triumph." Ntuli defines *ubuntu* as African for humanness. *Ubuntu* means, "I am, because you exist," expressing community life and collective responsibility against excessive individualism. *Ubuntu* invokes thoughts of "caring for and sharing with each other as individuals work towards building a humane society." *Ubuntu*, as a cultural concept, therefore means "understanding diversity and engaging difference for peace and development." (Ntuli, 30/1/2000). Practically, *ubuntu* is the extension of the extended family system onto the public domain and synonymous with the 'bonding' in World Bank's Serageldine's graph study. *Ubuntu* reconciles with the 'bonding' when the traditional bonds are transformed into opportunities and options, engineered by the African state in its *ubuntu* management system under the African Renaissance process.

Key to understanding the implication of *ubuntu* as a cultural force to the African Renaissance is relevance of inter-dependence and mutual struggle in the goal of Africa's progress. It is grounded in the African cultural value that "we are each a vital force and our lives do make a difference." African self-esteem needs a boost because it has been deflated by both colonialism and the capricious attitudes of its own post-independence elites. Africans are in search of lost dignity, so necessary for productivity and competitiveness. In the context of Africa today, Ntuli explains that "*ubuntu*" is a

metaphor to describe the significance of group solidarity on survival issues so central to the survival of African communities. These communities who are as a result of mounting poverty and deprivation survive by way of communal care and not by individual self-reliance. Ntuli, however, is quick to point out that *ubuntu* is not just a strategy for 'mere' survival and a re-active force but "a pro-active force based on cosmic dynamism."

For Ntuli, many of the problems affecting Africa today can be traced to a lack of *ubuntu*. Youth crises are common because of parents who lack *ubuntu*. To correct this problem, Africa has to employ *ubuntu*, that is, "live and let live." Crimes such as the massive looting of Africa's treasury are explained as having a lack of *ubuntu*. A person endowed with the *ubuntu* spirit cannot hurt, rob or harm another. *Ubuntu* seeks harmony over disorder, encourages harnessing the sharing and promotes mutual help necessary for social development.

The necessary eradication of African values that are incompatible with the progress in today's world should not be seen only from the moral-ethical regulations and other customs but also from the structural frames within which the colonialists created the African nation-states. The lack of African history and culture in the creation of African nation-states is partly the cause of the civil wars, conflicts, hatred, tribalism, and general distress in which Africa finds itself in today. The prevention and/or reduction of ethnic violence in Africa demand a reconstruction of the African nation-state with the consent of the African people in the framework of their histories and cultures. Prevention/or

reduction of Africa's conflicts based on its history and culture will help Africa's search for peace and progress.

But how are Africans to go about the reconstruction of their nation-states dictated by their indigenous values? Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle's *Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa* (2000) examines Africa's colonial experience, the transplantation of Western political values, and post-independence structural transformation, and argues the need for modification of African values in today's modern world for Africa to progress. While he recognizes some inhibiting elements within the African culture, he argues that in systems that engaged in partisan democratic practice, no-party military regimes, and one-party socialism post-colonial Africa elites were "misfit that were weak, politically corrupt, ineffective". Osabu-Kle argues that democratic values and practices existed in Africa before colonial contact. After examining African indigenous democratic systems of the Ga, Ashanti, Zulu and Ovimbunda he asserts that indigenous African democracy can be modified to suit Africa's present needs. This modified system should be "built on a non-partisan and consensual democratic practice with a balance between centralization and decentralization to help African society make decisions forged at all levels of government. Social choice in that system is more likely to reflect the preferences of individuals comprising society and to be more consistent and coherent" (p.273).

How is this to be done? In an interview published in *West Africa* (2-8 October, 2000, p.43) Osabu-Kle explains that in each of the African ethnic groups there is a symbol for

unity. These symbols have to be transferred to the national level, just as ideological symbols were transferred in the case of Britain from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland to constitute the Union Jack. The formation of African ethnic groups had come about by clans transferring their ideological symbols of unity from the clan level to the ethnic centre to constitute that particular ethnic group. The Asante ethnic group of Ghana had come about through this process by bringing disparaging clans to form the powerful Asante kingdom. That same process can be used to transfer ideological symbols of unity from the ethnic level to the national level to constitute a strong nation. The process can transfer the ideological symbols of unity from the national level to constitute the United States of Africa. How practical is this process? This is practical because the process of doing that is already there and it has been done before as exemplified by the five clans that came together to form the Asante nation.

General Mohammed Abshir, the de facto administrator of collapsed Somalia region of Boosaaso, argues: “We have to go back to our traditional ways of solving our problems, traditional ways of working together. Otherwise, Boosaaso [a port in war-torn Somalia] would not have peace” (Ayitteh 1998,p.85). To overcome the present crises, Africa must examine the positive and negative aspects of the African culture with an eye to understanding the aspects that oppose Africa’s progress and the aspects that enhance, regenerate, reconcile, and protect Africa’s progress.⁶

⁶ Most advocates of “back to African roots” say it without looking at the pollutants within the culture. They talk as if merely going back to African culture will speed up progress or that the culture is so perfect that a wholesale appropriation will bring rapid progress without looking at the overall nature of the culture—its negative and positive aspects in the modern context.

African diversity makes its culture difficult to grasp and systematize. However, common African values also equate to common inhibitions stifling Africa's progress. Etounga-Manquette explains the reality of the polluted African culture in the following typology: hierarchical distance; control over uncertainty; the tyranny of time; individual power and authority; the community dominating the individual; excessive conviviality and rejection of open conflict; inefficient economies; high costs of irrationalism; and cannibalistic and totalitarian societies. The above converge to spell trouble for Africa today. Africa must reject certain traditional morals and customs today that hinder its progress, if it is to join the modern capitalist system. Today's Africa is not like ancient Africa where despite magnificent feats in some array of fields, supernatural powers explained everything. The African era that suffered the slave trade and colonialism is inadequate for today's African realities. What are some of the problems? Is it Africa's concept of time? Or could it be Africans and their governments' poor economic management? Is it the elites' massive dabbling in the occult practice of *juju/marabou*? It is paramount for Africa to understand what is irrational in the context of Africa's progress in the global system, dispose of it, and then integrate the good with the enabling aspects of the global system. After all, the African Renaissance seeks the aforementioned as a goal. "A society in which magic and witchcraft flourish today is a sick society ruled by tension, fear, and moral disorder. Sorcery is a costly mechanism for managing conflict and preserving the status quo, which is, importantly, what African culture is about" (Etounga-Manquette, 2000,p.73).

So whether through witchcraft or other occult practices like human sacrifice, or burying humans alive with *juju/marabou* potion and charms, the thoughts and behaviour of

modern Africa are refracted. African elites are suspected of perpetrating such practices leading to a dysfunctional mentality nation-wide and the fostering of a society of mass irrationality, disorder, tension, fear, and copycats. Africans, particularly the elites, are suspected to be at the mercy of African occult practices that appear to control the rhythms of Africa's thoughts, behaviour, and progress, and foist a poisonous mentality onto African society. "Sorcery also extends to government. Witchdoctors surround African presidents and nothing that really matters in politics occurs without recourse to witchcraft. Occult counselors, responsible for assuring that authority keeps their power by detecting and neutralizing possible opponents, have power that the most influential Western advisers would envy" (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. 63-70). The witch doctors and other African occult masters⁷ occasionally have an official designation. Masters of the African occult have a tight grip on African society through the elite they control. Witchcraft practices even impinge on economic aids and development programs. "Witchcraft is for us a psychological refuge in which all our ignorance finds its answers and our wildest fantasies become realities," argued Etounga-Manuelle (2000,p.73).

The influence of invisible forces in Africa's progress is captured by Dirk Kohnert in *Magic and Witchcraft: Implications for Democratization and Poverty-Alleviating Aid in Africa* (1996, p.1347-1355). *Juju/marabou*, witchcraft, and other occult forces are deeply entrenched in most African societies, despite a boom in modernization and over 40 years of independence, regardless of education, religion, and social class. Due to stress and

⁷ Massively depended upon by African elites, the *juju/marabou* art, more performed by men than women because of the patriarchic nature of the African culture, technically directs Africa's thought and moral underpinnings. Since one cannot explain any progress without its spiritual origin, the influence of *juju/marabou* on Africa's progress cannot be dismissed.

strain caused by the modernization process, the influence of invisible forces is increasing. Many Africans still interpret events in terms of witchcraft and other occult practices—progress and failure are seen in this way.

Therefore, it is some aspects of African culture, which should determine the success or progress of Africa that becomes its main stumbling block. And paradoxically, it is African politics that has the power to change the African culture and save it from the high incidence of influence of invisible forces. Instead, politics is polluting the nation-state, instilling it with massive irrationality and low social capital. What a dilemma! A society that has such a disturbing level of influence by invisible forces entrenched in a culture of witchcraft and other occult practices, and a low level of social capital, will have problems getting development cooperation. The reason being the pollutants within the culture will destroy most of the development aids.

In Africa's multi-ethnic societies, where tribalism hold sway, and where ethnic groups struggles daily for power and control of scarce resources, development projects and other poverty-alleviating aid are likely to further fuel social stress and strain to an already endangered delicate balance of power. In such a climate, accusations of witchcraft flourish, making these accusations to serve as signals of latent, unknown conflicts that are difficult to investigate by other methods (Kohnert, 1996,p.1347).

What are the implications of this for Africa's democratic aspirations? The quest for good government brought about by accountability and transparency, human rights and rule of

law projects, and the constant emphasis on poverty alleviation, puts stress on the political and social elite of African states receiving development assistance. Against this social climate, *juju/marabou*, witchcraft and other occult practices, suspicion, mistrust, accusations, and interpretations flourish as the search for scapegoats heighten to explain individual and group misfortune. Additional threats are posed for open dialogue in Africa. The Cameroonian, Celestine Monga asks, "Will Africans end up calling upon the power of marabouts, inspired prophets, or sorcerers to organize democratization and the education of the masses? Will the validity of public policy adopted in sub-Sahara Africa soon come to depend on the degree of spirituality it exhibits?"

RECONCILIATION: AFRICAN AND GLOBAL VALUES

If culture is the mother of society and all institutions flow from it, then weaknesses in the culture are invariably proportional to the health of institutions in the society, and reveal the rate of progress in the society. Considering Africa's colonial legacy and the global setting today, there is need for reconciliation of African values, the colonial legacy, and global values. Reconciliation is needed because, although Africa's culture may vary considerably from Western culture, the continent has nevertheless experienced a much greater pace of westernization than anywhere in the non-western world (Mazrui, 1980, p.47). The reconciliation of the two does not mean the subsuming of Africa's cultural values, but rather the preservation and enhancement of them. African cultural values are said to be among the most humanistic on earth. The humanitarian values include solidarity beyond age classification and social status; affectionate social interaction and communalism; the love of neighbor, whatever the color of skin; the defense of the environment; and the balance between the physical and the metaphysical (Etounga-

Manquelle, 2000, p.75). Cultural retooling must come from within, according to the dictates of the African Renaissance. “We must destroy all within us that is opposed to our mastery of our future, a future that must be prosperous and just, a future in which the people of Africa determine their own destiny through participation in the political process” (Etounga-Manquelle, 2000, p.75).

How is Africa to destroy what has been hindering its progress? Perhaps more perplexing concerns Africa reviving the good, enabling aspect of its values for progress. The inadequacy in Africa’s cultural vision in relation to the new realities confronting it demands an historical look as well as a critique of African values standing in the way of its progress. During the era of the slave trade and colonialism, certain negative ideologies bordering on survival polluted the African culture. Africans like Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle calls for “Hammering Lake of Fire” (Ottawa, 25 January, 2001)-- a sort of sweeping revolution of the African mind formed by the African culture. In the same revolutionary tone, however, Daniel Etounga-Manquelle suggests that Africans initiate peaceful cultural revolutions if the unprogressive indigenous values are to be eradicated.⁸ Whether radical or peaceful, an African cultural revolution should revolve around the following grounded in Africa’s history and shaped by Africa’s culture in relation to the enabling aspects of the global culture: critical education reforms rooted in African culture and history that will revive and inculcate the indigenous ethic of responsibility and duty, and

⁸ There have been many so-called revolutions in Africa such as Ghana’s Jerry John Rawlings’ “Peoples Revolution” but all have not gone deeper into the indigenous African culture in order to unearth the dirt within that has been preventing Africa’s modernization. Neither have they brought out the positive aspects for appropriation in policy making. Despite the so-called revolution most Ghanaians still interpret events by witchcraft and think HIV/AIDS is caused by witchcraft. What is needed now is revolution in native African values in order to open up the African culture to forces of progress.

love for work. Transformation of African women from a culture that treat them as property of African men is paramount. Political change will bring a new type of African citizenship giving the individual room to maneuver in a pluralistic society that reflects Africa's ethnic diversity. To revolutionize the African economic culture means to recognize hard work and to lessen the incidence of hedonism. Individual initiative need hold sway coupled with inalienable rights. Authoritarianism that is embedded in the African culture should give way to liberty, probity, and human rights. Lastly, there should be a changing of social life through behaviour, self-confidence, trust, and a commitment to modernism.

As explained earlier, the African value crises result from a disconnection between African values and Western transplanted ones that came about during the colonial era. This disconnection has precluded the African from seeing the negative values embedded within his/her culture; values that have opposed Africa's mastery of its future. Consequently, the negative values outweigh the positive values. Notwithstanding, a reservoir of progressive African values can still be harnessed for Africa's Renaissance. A World Bank study (Dia, 1996, p.vii) quotes Basil Davidson's *The African Genius* in this context:

In the end, it will be a matter of knowing how the civilization of the past can be remade by a new and bold vision. The Africans sorely need their modern revolution: profound and far-reaching in creative stimulus, unleashing fresh energies, opening new freedoms. The world's experience may help. But the structures that are needed will have to stand on their own soil. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that these new structures, as and when they emerge, will be nourished by the vigour and

resilience of native genius, by all the inheritance of self-respect and innovating confidence that has carried these people through past centuries of change and cultural expansion (Davidson, 1996, p.317)

The disconnection between formal African institutions brought in from the Western world and traditional African ones, suggests institutional reconciliation between the two as the key to the institutional and economic development of Africa. Other societies have recognized this and have effected such reconciliation: Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan (China) exemplify societies that have modern production and advanced technology while at the same time maintaining their core native cultural values. An in-depth World Bank study launched in 1992, titled *Africa's Management in the 1990s*, speaks to institutional capacity in sub-Saharan Africa and its subsequent impact on economic and social development. The study concluded that (a) the problem of capacity building is more a capacity utilization problem than a technical problem. The availability of skills, methods, systems, and technology exists. (b) the institutional crisis is a structural and financial disconnect between informal, indigenous institutions rooted in Africa's history and the culture and formal institutions transplanted from the Western world; and (c) institutional reconciliation is the *sin qua non* to resolving the African crisis (Dia, 1996, p.1).

To implement institutional capacity building, let local African values, not those that flourish *juju/marabou*, dictate institutional capacity building in the reconciliation paradigm. Then the inhibiting values, which for centuries have been embedded in the

African culture, will be exposed. The exposure of these developmentally inhibiting values will lead to policies designed to eliminate the inhibiting values or at least refine them for Africa' progress. Likewise, the long suppressed positive African values will come to light yielding policy formulation. For instance, the Ghanaian government in 1998 enacted legislation banning the ancient traditional practices of *tyokosi*, whereby teenage virgin girls were enslaved to shrines. The girls were abused and had their rights violated for sins committed by their parents. The Ghanaian mass media exposed such practices among the Ewe ethnic group in the Volta Region of the country. In the aftermath, local and international human rights organizations have campaigned for *tyokosi*'s ban. It is hoped the *tyokosi* legislation will put a permanent stop to that heinous practice. Human rights organizations monitoring such practices could use the legislation to help free the *tyokosi* girls that are being transgressed against ("Atoning The Sins of Others Children," www.africanews.com.p.1-3, accessed: 2000/03/03)

In summary, the revival of African culture through the African Renaissance shows Africa to be at crossroads—its institutions crumbling with its people poverty-ridden, diseased ridden, and living in fear and unnecessary tension fuelled by a society entrenched in witchcraft and other occult practices. Africa's elites are confused, mistrustful, and suspicious of one another. And this, in this thesis' opinion, is the motor for change. Irrationality level is increasing and wars and rumours of war are daily phenomena. Similar to what occurred in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea the need for either a cultural revolution or reconciliation or modification of Africa's traditional indigenous values is appropriate today. These countries adopted a culture of rigour and hard work, good social

capital, and reconciliation of local indigenous institutions with global institutions. They freed themselves from the prison of supernatural powers. For Africa to do the same, it must go to the root of its culture to erase the layer of cultural dirt that has prevented its societies from its potential progress.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Chapter Two discussed the debate about African culture and its progress, and expressed the view that Africa is at crossroads with its institutions incapable of containing its mounting problems. It was explained that African culture was suppressed and polluted during the eras of slave trade and colonialism. As a result, there have been calls for either a cultural revolution or modification, of Africa's indigenous values and reconciliation with global values. To emulate Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, Africa must go to the roots of its culture to erase the layer of cultural dirt that has prevented it from moving into modernization. It is from the perspective of African culture that the African Renaissance process should be used to contain Africa's downward slide. In other words, an African Renaissance can also assist Africa to look within its culture and exploit it for developmental goals.

This chapter explores the various debates raging in and out of Africa about the African Renaissance process, and analyzes what constitutes the African Renaissance. It explains how to achieve the renaissance, including routes to take, how to communicate it effectively to the African peoples, and how to involve ordinary people. Some critique and suggestions/prospects of the renaissance process are discussed at the end.

"Renaissance" means rebirth. Renaissance as an idea began in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. It involved massive social movements, quantitatively and qualitatively, in a period of social, economic, and cultural decay known as the Dark Ages. The changes

that occurred during the Renaissance revolved around: scientific advances in technology and biochemistry; round-the-world journeys of exploitation; increase in trade by sea; invention of the printing press; the beginning of what is now called freedom of thought and the need to increase knowledge; and the flourishing of art as a form of expression and cultural identification. Economic and domestic necessities were the catalyst for this movement, and collaboration between scholars/skilled artists and merchants/feudal lords was the means of effecting the Renaissance. The reasons underpinning the rebirth were economic, cultural, technological, social forces, and a desire for a stable political base. (Mavivi, 2000).

The idea about an African Renaissance had been in existence since the independence struggles after the Second World War, but the first conspicuous proponent of the African Renaissance was South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki. He tabled the idea in 1994 when he was deputy President. He said the renaissance process in Europe and the conditions under which it took place relate to modern-day Africa, but an African Renaissance will only be achieved by overcoming many obstacles. Some of these obstacles are: civil war; huge debt burden; unfair international trade practices; massive corruption; and predatory and confused elites at the helm. Other obstacles are: Africa's marginalization in the global economic system; high incidence of occult practices in the public domain; declining life expectancy; socio-cultural and spiritual decay; and a deepening neo-colonialism. Indeed, say Africa has been driven under neo-colonialism into its third dark age, the first being the era of captive slavery, and the second, the era of colonial conquest and enslavement. Africa needs rebirth.

Different perceptions of the African renaissance exist, however. Ali Mazrui, director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at the State University of New York, says the African Renaissance represents a sense of groping for reconstruction in Africa. On the other hand, Y.L. Myakayaka Mavivi, a Member of Parliament of South Africa, is of the view that the African Renaissance started in 1957 when Ghana became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence in the twentieth century. Secondly, the Renaissance was re-energized when the socialist states collapsed in 1989. Thirdly, the end of the Cold War led to a resurgence of political and economic renewal in Africa that surpassed the decolonization process of the 1960's. Finally, the thirst for democracy in the whole of Africa energized the African people towards renaissance far more than the nationalist movements of the independence struggle. It was this thirst for democracy and rule of law that culminated in the liberation of South Africa from the evil practice of apartheid.

An African resident in London, U.K, responding to a cover story on the African Renaissance debate, wrote that the African Renaissance means Africans getting involved in reviving African traditions for progress. "It should also mean change in attitudes: self-dependency, pride in African traditions, curtailment of our taste for foreign goods and creation of demand for local products" (*West Africa*, 9-22 November, 1998,p. 796). For former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida, who presided over the near explosion of Nigeria into civil war and who failed to live an exemplary public life for an African Renaissance, explained, "the African renaissance, as solution to Africa's years of woes,

lies in the creation of a democratic space in all African states in order to understand the African predicament and foster the fundamental and durable grounds for Africa's rebirth" (*West Africa*, 7-27 September, 1998, p.655).

The African Renaissance, according to Moeletsi Mbeki in a speech given at the South African Institute of International Relations on 21 October, 1997 points to all of Africa's possible futures. These possible futures include "a glorious world where all economic, political and social shackles have been shrugged off, and Africa has confidently taken control of her own future on equal terms with the rest of the world." Moeletsi Mbeki argues that the Renaissance, as a concept, poses some difficulties since it is European in origin. However, it can be applied to similar conditions in Africa. In the European context, it refers to an awakening or rebirth of knowledge after the Dark Ages following the collapse of the Roman Empire. For Mbeki, the European Renaissance was a return to the roots of Western civilization and culture, and Africa's Renaissance should be modeled similarly.

Thus, he models his understanding of an African renaissance on the European experience. The troubling aspect of this idea is that the European circumstances were different from those of today's Africa—there was no "tyrannical international political economic system, uneven terms of trade, fractious interference by the 'powers that be' in their system/ competition, etc as we have in Africa today. He has two views of African Renaissance. The first, used variously by the African National Congress (ANC) in its foreign policy, describes the African renaissance as the cornerstone of South Africa's

foreign policy, relating not only to African countries, but also to all of Africa's international relations. The second view divides the African Renaissance into two phases: the first was the restoration of Africa's political independence fashioned after Ghana's first President, the late Kwame Nkrumah's, whose rallying call was: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be given"; and the second view held that African societies had to reconstruct anew, purged of the pollution of foreign domination and control. (Mbendi, 21 October, 1997). Forty years after independence, the rallying cries for Africa's rebirth call for seeking first Africa's economic kingdom and all else shall be given. This is after seeking first the cultural kingdom, as this work argues, and all else shall be given, as the European Union has done which has resulted in its integration.

George Ayitteh, a Ghanaian economics teacher at the American University in Washington D.C, takes a more radical position, saying there is already a "failed renaissance" because of African leaders' attitudes, and that the real renaissance will come when Africans look more internally rather than externally. For him, despite colonial exploitation and western imperialism that left Africa in bad shape, Africa's present situation is as a result of internal factors such as confused leaders, chronic corruption, capital flight, economic mismanagement, senseless civil wars, political tyranny, flagrant violations of human rights, and military adventurism to the detriment of Africa's culture and tradition. Ayitteh argues that the recent assistance given by Western governments and their non-government organizations to pro-democracy and other human rights organizations in Africa—that is, civil society in general— such as a U.S bill (H.R. No. 3890) that seeks to promote democracy and good government in Nigeria through a

US\$37-million budget, is good for Africa's rebirth. This marks the first time in sub-Saharan Africa that Washington is openly funding opposition groups and not just the government. Assistance to Africa's civil society in this form will bring about the actual African renaissance, according to Ayitteh. Ayitteh suggests more assistance is needed to build "tools", or institutions, like freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly. Western donors and civic groups have done little to cultivate African civil society. This is evidenced by a lack of funding to the activities of indigenous African non-governmental organizations. (CIVITAS, Sept.-Oct, 1998. vol.2 no.5)

Chinweizu, a noted Nigerian author and editor of *Black Renaissance*, argues the African Renaissance means Africans freeing themselves from the debt burden, imperialism and the European dominated global system to which Africa has been bonded since the 15th century.

It must also liberate itself from the white supremacist ideology in all areas; de-colonise and re-Africanise the language and conceptual framework; teach the scientific and Afro centric history of Africa, and indeed of the black world in a global context...We must reconstruct our societies, not for the relentless pursuit of profit beyond even the dream of avarice, but rather for the pursuit of containment and social peace and happiness...to create new African societies whose overriding value is eco-moral uprightness, not the socially and ecologically destructive accumulation of private wealth.(West Africa,7-27 September, 2000,p.655)

Chinweizu also maintains that the African Renaissance should encourage environment friendly industrialization that will create the economic pillars for Africa's security and

"semi-autarchic mega-economies." This will enable the use of African resources to meet the needs of Africa against today's externally-defined and directed wants which now rule in Africa's economic and productive behaviour.

For Peter J. Schraeder (2000, p.2-22), and other commentators, the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first democratically elected president symbolized the African Renaissance. Since then campaigns by millions of Africans to entrench democratic and human rights practices have occurred. Mandela's embracing of his former apartheid enemies, such as F.W. de Klerk, 'Pit' Botha, and the National Party, in a rainbow, national government illustrates Mandela's wisdom and desire to reconstruct a new South Africa. He realized that the struggle for a new Africa required the political expertise of the former regime and a new generation of African leaders. These new African leaders are committed to multi-ethnic societies rooted in tolerance, the protection of universal human rights, and the rule of law. The list includes African policymakers, technocrats, and private entrepreneurs who are in the forefront of re-making inefficient economies to free the African entrepreneurial spirit and energy. As a result, the negative portrayal of Africa's inability to feed itself is changing to that of a positive image depicting rising food production. Additionally, Schraeder indicates, the explosion of newspapers, radio and television, and literature signal the progressive decline of state-sponsored censorship. A new generation of African reporters, writers, and scholars are committed to fostering, protecting, and strengthening democratic institutions in the new millennium.⁹

⁹ More exposed to world developments such as cultural pluralism and information technology than their predecessors, the new generation of African journalists, writers, and scholars are well placed to look more

According to Thabo Mbeki, the need for the African Renaissance is informed largely by the following statement: "We speak of a continent which, while it led in the very evolution of human life and was a leading centre of learning, technology and the arts in ancient times, has experienced various traumatic epochs: each one of which has pushed her peoples deeper into poverty and backwardness" (www.anc.za,p.2). He refers to these periods as follows: Captive slavery, which robbed the continent of millions of her healthiest and most productive inhabitants and reinforced the racist and criminal notion that Africans are sub-human; Imperialism and colonialism, which resulted in the rape of raw materials; the destruction of traditional agriculture and domestic food security, and the integration of Africa into the world economy as a subservient participant; Neo-colonialism, which perpetuated the economic system, while creating the possibility for the emergence of new national elites in independent states, themselves destined to join the dominant global forces opposing and exploiting the masses.

The result of the three epochs has been the never-ending political instability, formation of predatory elites, and growth of international debt stifling most African countries, and declines in the standard of living and the quality of life for millions of Africans. The task of the African Renaissance process, President Mbeki says, is to learn from the experience covering the period from slavery to date. At a speech given in Pretoria, South Africa on October 11, 1999, during the launch of the African Renaissance Institute, President Mbeki said the idea of African Renaissance is not new. However, favourable conditions

within their culture for solutions to Africa's crises. For this reason, they will be able to understand the diffusion and infusion of cultures within the global village and how to appropriate the ensuing good values

now exist for the process to be enhanced. These conditions include: (a) The completion of the continental process of the liquidation of the colonial system in Africa attained as a result of the liberation of South Africa. (b) The recognition of the bankruptcy of neocolonialism by the masses throughout the continent, including the majority of the middle strata. (c) The weakening of the struggle among the major powers for spheres of influence, as a consequence of the end of the Cold war. (d) The acceleration of globalization (www.anc.za, p.2).

As an activist-oriented paradigm, African Renaissance grounds all development models and theories in African culture first. It searches for ways in which theories of development can be African-centred and how these can be grafted in some of the desirable elements of the global culture such as human rights, democracy, education, accountability, and science and technology. Two institutions have been established to advance the aims and objectives of the African Renaissance process. The African Renaissance Institute in Gaborone, Botswana, is one. The other is in Pretoria, South Africa. Their aims include encouraging the use of the latest techniques and technologies borrowed from the global culture to resolve the long-standing problems of: a) poverty and deprivation; b) technological backwardness; c) financial and economic dependency; d) macro-economic management for global economic competitiveness; e) enterprise development vis-à-vis the constraints faced by local private sector enterprises; and f) addressing the plight of the youth, women and the issue of growing unemployment.

Professor Pitika Ntuli, a member of the Pretoria branch of the African Renaissance Institute, looks at the African Renaissance from an African cultural perspective, as earlier indicated. He deepens the argument of those who pin culture as the basis of the African Renaissance on culture. He says the revival of African culture results from colonialism and its appendix of apartheid that systematically alienated Africa from its value systems and, in the process, impoverished it culturally, economically and educationally. He explains how Africa's education models, products of the Oxbridge/Sorbonne axis, scorn African cultural values resulting in epistemological, economic, psychological and other imbalances that are plaguing Africa today. For him, the African Renaissance is all about defining Africa on Africa's terms and to formulating the strategies necessary to bring about Africa's rebirth. (Ntuli, 2000). This situation still exists because of the confused elites Africa is having, who gain more from such twisted atmosphere rather than seek to overhaul it.

In this regard, E. A. Ayandele, professor of history, extends Ntuli's thinking by stating that Western education is partly responsible for the decline of Africa and today's need for rebirth. He argues that through Western education, the entrapped Africans ceased to be Africans, seeing themselves through the white man's prism. He argued that disoriented, Africans began to acquire the status of rudderless, mis-educated or de-educated, misshapen and warped mind, and evolving a "neither-here-nor-there lifestyle, eclectic, synthetic--a veritable mish-mash." For Ayandele, these educational ills led to a confused intellect to recognize the values of African cultural heritage; and

Abortive nationhood; exploitation of primordial ethnic and centrifugal forces by an irredeemably selfish class; mentally-enslaving exotic formal education yielding products that society and women eternally banished to cultural and physical limbo; a public health system that diagnoses disease rather than delivers a cure; an economy which internally does not deliver daily bread to the greater part of the present, but which externally has already mortgaged the welfare of the future generation; a morally void and spiritually bankrupt society in which the brawn browbeats the brain, baiting the latter with filthy lucre; an uncontrolled... social engineering process determined by the Western world view [and] embraced by the so-called educated elite who, far from promoting societal harmony and cohesion, has undermined traditional moral and social values, without an effective replacement. (West Africa, 7-27 September 1998, p655)

This is too much generalization, since some African elites are leading in this whole renaissance crusade, so it is not like the blind leading the blind in the renaissance call. The African civil society, too, is still relatively embryonic. To define African Renaissance and to lay blame for Africa's woes in the context of Renaissance, one must look at the history, culture, economics, politics, education, and technology of Africa. Although disparate views exist, together they cast light on some of the determinants of the African Renaissance. Some questions have been partially answered but more probing is needed. What history informs the African renaissance? What type of economic model? What educational system? What kind of politics? What culture? What kind of technology? These questions reveal what is fashionable and what is not concerning the Renaissance. South Africa's Vice-President, Jacob Zuma, surmizes how to analyze the concept and define it for the ordinary African. He believes the African Renaissance discourse has essentially occurred at the elite level. "It should not remain at the level of

the intellectual debate,” he told a conference on the concept in London, U.K. (*West Africa*, 13-19 December, 1999, p.18).

Many variables converge, calling for complete overhaul of the African system. The main determinants, therefore, of the African Renaissance are history, culture, and economics. The reason is that all the other African facts indicated above such as politics and education, which weaknesses also call for the African Renaissance process, revolve around history, culture, and economic.

Let us now discuss the some key determinants of the African Renaissance in detail.

KEY DETERMINANTS OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

HISTORY

History explains some of the determinants of the African Renaissance. General Ibrahim Babangida, Chinweizu, Pitki Ntuli, and Adele Jinadu are proponents of history as a determinant of African Renaissance. Africa's internal social crisis, external and internal exploitation, under-development of agriculture and industry, huge intra-continental indebtedness, indebtedness to international institutions and foreign countries, mass unemployment and poverty, disease and illiteracy, discrimination and access to resources are all appreciated from historical perspectives. Babangida's historical viewpoint refers to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and colonialism, with its forced jamming of different African ethnic groups and their socio-economic systems into one colonial state. This facilitated the domination of several African social formations under one flag as the key-

inhibiting element in Africa's development. He described this mode of colonial domination as the "disarticulation of [the] African historical process." (ibid)

Looking through the same historical lens, Chinweizu sees the past not only in terms of the agony of colonialism, imperialism and slave trade and, therefore, reflection of the present problems, but a glorious past which should direct the African Renaissance. Chinweizu, like other Renaissance advocates such as Pitika Ntuli and Thabo Mbeki explain the African Renaissance is not reviving primitivism and barbarism, but reviving Africa. Africa is viewed to have been at the forefront of civilization symbolized by such world-class works like the Pyramid on the Nile, the stone villages of Zimbabwe on the Zambezi-Limpopo Basin, and the remarkable bronzes of the Niger Basin. Africa was the origin of an agricultural revolution that made civilization possible through the domestication of plants and then animals around 1600 BC (in Aswam) and 1300 BC, respectively. States were created and the Pharaonic structure in the Nile Valley emerged between 5000 BC and 4000 BC. The pyramids are testament to present-day Egypt and Sudan. (*West Africa*, 7-27 September 1998, p.654). Chinweizu also maintains it was African civilization that gave birth to astronomy and metallurgy. Pharaonic astronomy's mathematics produced the 365-day calendar as well as the Zodiac of astrology. From African medical science came the Kemetic physicians over 6,000 years ago. Africa was the source of earlier scripts and alphabets from which the Greek, Hebrew, Phoenician, Roman and Arabic alphabets were derived. (ibid)

Pitki Ntuli quoted Thabo Mbeki in his speech in Ottawa on 30/1/2000, which paralleled Chinweizu's Lagos speech, pinning today's Renaissance on Africa's glorious past and not excessively on its painful past. He stated "...The beginning of our rebirth as a Continent must be our own rediscovery of our soul captured and made permanently available in the great works of creativity represented by the pyramids and sphinxes of Egypt, the stone buildings of Axum and the ruins of Carthage and Zimbabwe, the rock paintings of the San, the Benin bronzes and the African masks, the carvings of the Makonde and the stone sculptures of the Shona." (SABC, Gallagher Estate, 13 August, 1998).

Political scientist Adele Jinadu, speaking at the TAS & Associates seminar in Lagos, Nigeria, said Africa's glorious past can be compared to Europe's past, citing African influence on the European Renaissance, notably Egyptian and Moorish. Ideological and racist reasons consigned African influence to a minimal presence in the writing of European and world history. (*West Africa*, 7-27 September 1998).

ECONOMY

Debate indicates the economic implications of the need for the African Renaissance are tied more to Africa's history than its culture. According to Chinweizu, Africa's dismal economic state is as a result of its civilization being under continuous siege, assault, and plunder by whites for the past 2,500 years. Arabs and Arabisers compounded the matter, laying siege to and subverting Africa since 642 AD...over 1,350 years," (*West Africa* 7-27, September, 1998, p.655). Mbeki adds that the growth of foreign debt, hanging like an

albatross around the neck of African states, combined with unfavourable terms of trade, leads to the inevitability of negative growth in national per capita income and subsequently producing a decline in the standard of living and the quality of life for hundreds of millions of Africans. For instance, a report carried in Zimbabwe's *Financial Times* (www.swazinews.co.sz. accessed: 25 September, 2000) indicates that economic policy has lost its path in several African states, making the late 1990s (predicted as start of Africa's Renaissance) look increasingly bleak. This occurred despite the International Monetary Fund's claim that the mid 1990s would ensure Africa's economy would expand by 4% in 2000, with greater gain predicted for the next year.

The African Renaissance Institute, ARI, in Gaborone, Botswana claims the need for African Renaissance stems from the fact that most of Africa's economic structures are not resilient to external shocks, and food production and manufacturing are inadequate to meet the needs of the continent's fragile youthful population. According to ARI rationale:

Debts and inflation persist in most African economies. Isolated cases of progress have often not been sustained, nor do most of them appear sustainable in the medium to long-term future. Research and Development of appropriate technologies necessary for development is not adequately institutionalized. Insufficient (and sometimes inappropriate) technologies, production processes and machinery are often imported at colossal costs. (Executive Summary, p.2-3).

The ARI further rationalize that Africa's "brain drain" is inhibiting medium to long-term development leading to increasing management problems to face the onslaught of globalization forces, the trans-border flow of capital, culture, and technology. Speaking at

the 3rd Africa Society Conference at the University of Alberta, Olusegun Sogunro of Central Connecticut State University argued that Africa's brain drain hinders development, resulting in skilled workers not being encouraged to stay home. Economic, social, and political factors as well as dim intellectual opportunities, do not provide incentive to remain home (Sogunro, 2000).

Decades of economic aid, albeit decreasing over the past decade (from US\$32 per African in 1990 to US\$19 in 1998) according to *The Economist* (February 24, 2001) have not helped to make home attractive. Development aid either does not reach the average African in any desirable way, or is wiped out by costly civil wars such as in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Sudan. With revenues falling short of expenditure, most African governments are increasingly finding it difficult to meet their development goals. Consequently, health, education, and social services crumble, as the spiral continues downward to include rising unemployment and spreading poverty, which lead to crime and social insecurity. (ari@powernet.bw, p.2. accessed: 10 November 1999). Mbeki adds that the elite who remain in Africa loot the national treasury and the entrenchment of corruption and patronage becomes endemic (www.anc.org.za, p.3. accessed. 24 September, 2000).

The cumulative effect leaves a region very poor, handicapped with severely negative per capita growth rates, low agricultural production, stagnation of industrial capacity, and average incomes and living conditions low by world standards. Africa contributed only 1.0% to world trade in 1993 (Ezeonu, 2000, p.3 citing Adedeji, 1993, p.3-5). Worse, per

capita income in 1994 was continuing to slide making Africa poorer in both relative and absolute terms. Between 1990-94, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Africa declined at a rate of 1.5% per annum while the total African population living under poverty increased at a much faster rate. The rural economies seriously declined, while cities lacked dynamism in sparking economic growth (ibid).

The *1999 Human Development Report*, released by the United Nations, measures a country's progress in terms of *life expectancy*, *educational attainment* and *adjusted real income*. The 9 lowest performers—Sierra Leone, Niger, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mozambique, Guinea, Eritrea and Mali—are all from sub-Sahara Africa. Even oil rich Nigeria, one of Africa's economic powerhouses, came 146th out of the 175 countries studied (ibid). From this weak economic ground, Ifeanyi Ezeonu wonders how Africa can "fairly participate in highly competitive global market which the Uruguay Round of trade agreement will only help to exacerbate." He sees the African Renaissance remaining a lingering illusion if the global Uruguay Round trade agreement is not modified, but taken as it is today and implemented in sub-Saharan Africa. Small wonder then, that the African Renaissance has been criticized and some doubt its success.

CRITIQUE AND EXPRESSION OF DOUBT

Critics of African Renaissance say the continent's realities contradict any semblance of renaissance. These critics are: Colin Legum, Adama Gaye, Sipho Seepe, Lord Owen, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Ifeanyi Ezeonu and Mahmood Mamdani. Colin Legum's latest book— *Africa since Independence* (2000)— includes a chapter called "A *Period of*

Renaissance?" In it he wrote about a Ghanaian professor of history, Wycliff Ogupu. Ogupu was teaching in South Africa and before leaving for his native Ghana, warned against unrealistic enthusiasm about the African Renaissance. The professor questioned how there could be "renaissance" (rebirth) when there has never been any "naissance" (birth). As an African, he found it hard to agree that Africans have ever had their "naissance" or "birth."

I think Mbeki should speak of an African birth now becoming possible but only because, at the bottom end of the twentieth century, we Africans have begun at last to realize the importance of the impact of European culture, science, language and liberty upon our ways. Our birth has still to come, let alone our rebirth. I believe, as did Kwame Nkrumah, that "when colonialism is placed on the scales, it will tip them in our favour." (P.71-72)

Ogupu's view about African Renaissance was first published in Johannesburg, South Africa's *Sunday Times* (22 May, 1998). He hoped that his published warning would alert readers to the African reality to avoid over-expectant euphoria in Africa and elsewhere about African Renaissance. What is missing in Ogupu's view is that actually there had been naissance, seen through Africa's glorious past in areas such as architecture, religion, universities, writing system, astronomy, and so if there things are bad today, there are bases for an African renaissance.

An article in South Africa's *Mail and Guardian* (cited by "West Africa" on 24-30 July, 2000, p.42) asks how there can be African Renaissance while Africans continue to live in

the global dark ages. The article looked at the year 2000 Zimbabwean elections as the background of the Renaissance: "Now, if the interests of the ruling class are at stake, the Constitution is no longer altered, but simply abused, the ballot boxes are falsified, the official bribed or intimidated...The consequences are catastrophic for the broad masses: unemployment as a result of the transfer of interest from agriculture to industrial production, overcrowding of the cities, rising prices and low wages are experienced everywhere." The article brought into question the calls for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be more sympathetic to Africa in the midst of the African Renaissance debate. Asking the institutions like the IMF and the developed world in general to soften their hearts is like the ANC petitioning the then ruling South African apartheid government to stop their persecution in the name of decency and fair play. The article portrays the global system of which of course Africa is part, as an illustration of Machiavelli's theory. It asks:

Did it not show clearly that reality was obedient to its own stern necessity, that all mere ideas were powerless when faced with its relentless logic, and that the only alternative was to submit to or be destroyed by it? An African renaissance in these conditions? Not, I fear, while we are still living in the global Dark Ages

Adama Gaye, the Senegalese editor of the London, U.K based *West Africa* magazine asks, "African Renai...What?" (13-19 December 1999). For Gaye, despite Mbeki and others' mixture of colourful and painful talk inside and outside Africa of the African Renaissance train, Africa has hit rock bottom. He writes, "Africa's future cannot be worse

than what it has gone through over this millennium." But more significantly, Africa's inability to join the agricultural and industrial revolutions is responsible for Africa's backwardness. Contributing to Africa's backwardness are slavery and colonialism, which robbed the continent of prime human resources, "spoliation of natural resources and an identity crisis." Gaye says Mbeki is trying to build Nelson Mandela's status, claiming Mandela uses the African Renaissance to define himself. To Gaye, Mbeki's reasons for drumming up support for African Renaissance are rooted in Africa's dark spots, not from its bright spots. These dark spots constitute the basis for morally re-arming the African. Gaye further argues that African Renaissance should be a bottom-up process, not top-down as conventional wisdom currently dictates. This is because the "top" has failed and is likely to keep failing. On the other hand, the "bottom" lacks resources for this role. Gaye believes the top-down approach of African Renaissance theory parallels Mbeki himself, a product of the ANC. In the ANC, a former liberation movement, the centralist method informed its operation and any idea coming from the top had to be implemented without questioning. African Renaissance, so far, is patterning itself after the ANC model (elites ruling). He describes Mbeki and the concept of renaissance in the following words:

When he talks about his African renaissance theory, Mbeki gives the impression that it is a foregone conclusion. He has even set up an African Renaissance Institute. Yes, we would like very much to see an African Renaissance. But, let's acknowledge the many hurdles on that road. Africa's future remains bleak. AIDS is spreading at an alarming rate. Bad governance is still there. Africans are fighting among themselves in many countries. There are millions of refugees throughout the continent. The best and brightest of its people are away or eager to go abroad in search of

greener pastures. Economic integration has not been achieved. And sadly, almost forty years after the biggest wave of independence, the most important topic on the agenda of African leaders when they meet is not longer about development. It is about peacekeeping.

Gaye claims current Renaissance debate misses the mark or is insignificant in the context of Africa's crumbling education system that is a key priority in national development. "No one should expect renaissance to happen in a **no mind's land**." Aside from Africa's education system crumbling due to financial drought, they are European creation, lacking African cultural and historical input. As such Africa's education system, as a determination of the renaissance, could be found in Africa's culture and history.

Similarly, Sipho Seepe, a principal of the Sebokeng campus of South Africa's Vista University, exploits Mbeki's weaknesses as a public figure to hurl criticism at African Renaissance. According to Seepe, Mbeki, as creator of renaissance, needs first to be reborn himself, for until such time he stifles the flow of African Renaissance. Mbeki has many faults. He is a power centraliser and an accumulator; undemocratic; ultra-sensitive; unable to accommodate others; impatient with different opinions; a man unable to accept he could be mistaken; and leans towards the direction of sycophants. This poses problems for the renaissance process since as protagonist he has to lead by example. Drawing a parallel between Mbeki and African Renaissance, Seepe thunders that:

An African renaissance, or any renaissance for that matter, requires an environment that encourages a flourishing and flowering of ideas. It requires environment that promotes robust and vibrant intellectual engagements. Robust engagement demands us to rigorously unpack and

expose the limitations or bankruptcy of the ideas of those with whom we differ. (The Mail & Guardian, Johannesburg, June 9, 2000,p.1-4)

Lord Owen, former British Foreign secretary and a proponent of Gaye, said the success of African Renaissance is predicated on Africa's confidence in itself and for it to stop pandering for help externally. Ali Mazrui, a Kenyan, said he blames African leaders for the malaise affecting Africa today accusing them of not taking accountability and its attendant consequences for the direction Africa has taken. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a Liberian and former assistant administrator and director of the United Nations Development Program for Africa, said leaders play a crucial role in developing and promoting the idea of the Renaissance. "We have not had the quality leadership throughout the region that would provide this kind of inspiration." (*West Africa*, 28th February-5th March, 2000,p.14-15). Where these good leaders, as was the case of Nigeria under Generals Mohammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon between 1983/85, they do not last in Africa.

For Mahmood Mamdani, a former director of African Studies at South Africa's University of Cape Town, the racialised knowledge and institutions of Africa's intelligentsia make it difficult to realize the Renaissance. "The only guarantee of de-racialised knowledge is an African-focused intelligentsia...It is, therefore, the role of states to create and nurture enabling conditions for this purpose. The conditions will need to create an institutional context receptive to African intelligentsia thought." (*West Africa* 19th-25th June, 2000, p.45). This is quite challenging since African elites (as are the states) aiming to create the very conditions that challenge their very existence. A

dilemma! But it is this dilemma and its accompanying confusion that will clear the existing confusion and spark the renaissance.

From a global trading perspective, Ifeanyi Ezeonu of the University of Toronto questions how Africa, especially Sub-Sahara Africa, can revive itself when international trade agreements such as the Uruguay Round, subvert African governments and their states. He says the international trade agreements ignoring basic issues that affect Africa are: worsening terms of trade; deteriorating balance of payments; lingering debt; right to development and subsequent ignorance by the Uruguay Round "legalises, consolidates and exacerbates the hegemony of the industrialized countries over sub-Sahara Africa." From here, Ezeonu says the prospect for African Renaissance can never be realized if Africa's nascent economies (and the welfare of the people) are controlled by Western multinationals in the name of liberalization. Protectionism, as practiced by the developed countries, makes it difficult or impossible for developing countries to penetrate necessary markets (e.g. with technology and labour mobility). It is doubtful if *'the emergence of the 21st century as the African century'* via the rebirth of the African continent will be realized in light of African states continuing to play second fiddle to the rest of the world and swallowing economic pills from the rich, developed North, who are uninformed by Africa's history and culture (ibid).

However, some Africans consider these criticisms as imperialist designs to derail a patriotic idea. Thus, Gumisa Mutume quoted South Africa's University of Witwatersrand's William Makgoba as saying, "the major problem about the debate about

the African Renaissance is not really coming from the Africans themselves, but from aliens either to discourage the concept or attempting to define what Africans are or should be" (MISAnet/Inter Press Service, 2000). Stephen Mbayo, in his review of the *African Renaissance* (2000), argues that the contributors to the book dismiss the view, such as Gaye's, that a Renaissance is doomed fail because of the many daunting problems facing Africa today.¹⁰ The contributors point to the conditions preceding European Renaissance and talk of Europe's success in overcoming the obstacles. Mbayo adds that working to resolve the current crises and preventing new ones is paramount for Renaissance to succeed.

AND SO WHAT IS AFRICAN RENAISSANCE?

Debate between proponents and opponents of African Renaissance centres on immediate and remote factors of Africa's crises. Machiavellian forces operating in an international system were responsible for the slave trade and colonialism. Africa's marginalization continues to be manipulated at the whims and caprices of the Western-dominated global economic machines. Consequently, Africa is riddled with massive debt and an unfair international trade system.

Some African elites aggravate the situation. Their attitude is responsible for their inability to reshape their respective nation-states based on African culture and history (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Bayart, 1993; Ayittey, 1992; Bayart, Ellis & Hobou, 1999). The

¹⁰ Despite fearful nature of Africa's problems with its in-built elements of old agendas and paradigms, the African Renaissance calls for new thinking and attitude. If the Renaissance fails Africa is finished since the process comes from Africa's troubles and core values. The African Renaissance process, therefore, should be seen as mother of Africa's on-going transition. (see appendix four)

African continent is the only region in the world where foreign models and theories are dominant (Ayttey, 1998; Mkandawire & Soludo, 1999; Osabu-Kle, 2000; Okafor, 2000). Other former colonies such as South Korea, Japan and Singapore successfully used their colonial experiences and their indigenous value for their progress. The increasing intrusion of pollutants from the African culture such as *juju* into the public sphere does nothing to develop energies like political dialogue, rule of law, accountability, and human rights.

Not only does it appear that African societies are failing to become more secular, as they were widely expected to do, but there is a sense in which they are 're-traditionalizing'--in that the realm of the 'irrational' is seemingly gaining in importance. (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p.71)

What is African Renaissance to make of this? The bottom line is that Africa is on its deathbed not only because of external factors like colonialism, slave trade and unfavourable terms of trade, but also because of internal factors like unprogressive cultural practices. Also, Africa's confused elites' inability to tailor their own native African values and their colonial experience to the good of Africa compounds the difficulty. Thabo Mbeki himself observed this truism when he told South Africa's Constitutional Assembly on May 8, 1999 that the aims of the African Renaissance are the containment of predatory elites and encouragement of cultural exchange. Also, the emancipation of African women from patriarchy, rule of law, the mobilization of youth, the broadening, deepening, and sustenance of democracy, and the initiation of sustainable economic development must occur for Africa to free itself from its deathbed.

What is the African Renaissance? First, it is the rebirth of African culture, informed by its history; and, second, it is reconciliation with the desirable elements of the global culture such as the rule of law, democracy, human rights, accountability, and science and technology. Somewhat contradictory, the African Renaissance is also the process of carefully integrating colonially-imposed structures with the revived African indigenous cultural values in conjunction with today's global values—human rights, accountability, democracy, science and technology. The African Renaissance is value-orientated—African values, revived, in harmony with global values. Significant is the rebirth of African culture informed by Africa's history—steeped in colonialism, wearing the face of Africa but the mind of Europe. Cultural revival will be in lock-step with the knowledge that slave trade and colonialism simultaneously suppressed and polluted African culture. African culture needs to be laid bare, free of ethnocentrism and the pollution of Eurocentrism and Africans own attitudes, which over the years, have created weaknesses and decay, and fuelled the African crises. A colonial mindset or mental slavery is counterproductive to the African Renaissance.

The African Renaissance process has to be entrenched in the cultural foundations of Africa that will snowball into cultural empowerment of the African and raise the African's cultural self-confidence like other cultures worldwide. For the slave trade and colonialism battered Africans' dignity and self-esteem. This has to be restored not only from the economic level but also at the cultural level as well. Once again, for Africa's material poverty is rooted in cultural pauperization, through totally ignoring of African

culture by the colonialists, who used the African as an object of no value for which any substitute could be found. Africa's renaissance, therefore, is possible only when its long-running suppressed cultural values are deeply rediscovered and the African Renaissance bid deeply rooted in it. Without priority given to culture, both the African Renaissance and its spirit of Pan-Africanism will become mere fiction and metaphysical illusion. A goal of the African Renaissance is to refine African culture for national development. Thus, Femi Biko (2000,p.34) states, "Cultural health is the locomotive of national health." Therefore, the African Renaissance process should be a platform for exposing both inhibitive and conducive elements in African culture. It should eliminate the unwanted excrescence, and refine and adapt those aspects that are conducive to development such as the *ubuntu* virtue of "I am because We are."

SUGGESTIONS/PROSPECTS

For an African Renaissance process to succeed there is an urgent need for moral renewal, respect for specific African values (since not all the values need respect and some have to be discarded), cultural education, and "especially the need to focus on improving learning within African universities...and redefine the role of the media within the African perspective" (Mboyo, 2000, p.45). Nigeria's Wole Soyinka, a Nobel Prize laureate, told me in an interview that he thinks time will encourage African leaders who possess vision to come together in support of the African Renaissance:

The O.A.U does not meet Africa's reality...It sat down while brutalities, coup detat, genocide, etc happen...Look at the Cote d'Ivoire coup...For the African Renaissance to work, we have to take the progressives in the Southern African Development Council and others in West Africa

for the African renaissance vision...Pan African solutions in Africa means we have to concentrate more in the African space than the diaspora...Can't see any vision even of Thabo Mbeki...Nelson Mandela should go beyond localised associations to the continental level but will need help from the rest of the continent. (Chat at the African Society Conference 2000, University of Alberta, Edmonton, February 25-26, 2000)

Soyinka further suggests the African Renaissance Institutes and the United Nations set up agenda for Africa's quantum leap. Individuals and institutions, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), need to do the following: spark debate on critical issues such as culture, debt, multinational corporations, code of conduct for businesses in Africa, issues on boundaries that do not meet Africa's reality, religion, the Sudanese problem, secularism, and finally, theocracy. Soyinka observes the emergence of quasi-official organizations willing to use strong African leaders for African Renaissance. "That's the only practical vision for the African Renaissance realization." Furthermore, rebirth should be a bottom-up process.¹¹

Joy Kwesiga, dean of social sciences at Uganda's Makerere University, says that in order for the African Renaissance to be effective Africa needs to look at the traditional role of African women, long suppressed and marginalized. The gender gap must disappear. More education is needed, including the encouragement of women in science and technology.

¹¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan and one of Africa's leading writers, told me in an interview at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario on February 4, 2000 that the African Renaissance should start simultaneously from the African base, that's its culture, as well as the top. This should start by decolonising the African mind first and that the renaissance should be powered by Africa's inner values freed from colonial contamination. One of these is for African writers to write in their native languages. He, however, did not indicate whether the African inner values should be critically evaluated or not, in modernization context, before their appropriation for policy making.

Technologies must be adapted to the African environment, and African women need to become familiar with divorce. Women's progress to date has occurred at the national level in Africa. Liberia and Uganda are examples of where women have even attempted to run for president. More has to be done for women if the African Renaissance is to work, Kwesiga cautions. She advised African states to learn from the example of South Africa that has allocated a portion of its budget for women. "There should be some elements of the Africa Renaissance formulae to strengthen women and equality. Though already African women are in the African Renaissance process, they need strengthening, more involvement, short of this there wont be any renaissance." (Kwesiga, 2000)

However, Mavivi claims Kwesiga missed the point. Despite favourable conditions influencing the emancipation of African women from patriarchy, struggle persists. Mavivi agrees with the late president of the ANC, Oliver Tambo that African women have to be in the forefront of their own liberation. Tambo warned African women: "There is no way an oppressor can liberate the oppressed." The trouble here is that the political elites appears not know that they are challenging their own status quo. African women must get involved from the beginning. African women need develop a sense of ownership of the African Renaissance. Because they are a majority, African women should be in the forefront of renewal and should be advancing their objectives. To emancipate is to empower. A gender focus needs to be prominent in any African Renaissance program, accompanied by a "gender audit" to safeguard its effectiveness.

Africa must reject what was imposed on it by the colonialists to break away from a culture of alienation, according to Nigeria's Abdul-Rashid Na'Allah of the Western Illinois University. For him, colonial administration alienated itself from the people. Anything the colonial administration did not understand was "rubbish". It attempted to transplant its culture in Africa. The end of colonial rule saw a huge gap between the people and the government. "...Everything was for the government, not for the people. " Examples include government quarters and residential areas such as the Government Reserve Areas (GRA) in Nigeria. Consequently, enclaves of foreign cultures (government versus its citizens) thrived in Africa. After colonial rule, alien culture continued to the extent that African people still think of government as a foreign entity.

Ghanaian-Canadian Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle, of Carleton University, deepens Na'Allah's view of colonial structures left behind in Africa. He explained in an interview with me in Ottawa on September 26, 2000 that African Renaissance will not take place in a vacuum but in certain structures established by the white man since colonial days. The colonial structures have remained precisely because independence did not mean decolonization that is the breaking down of the colonial economic, political and ideological structures. Replacement with structures oriented principally to African nationalist aspirations has not happened. Osabu-Kle says modification to the indigenous African culture to meet today's African situation must occur.

So far that has not happened. The new wine of the African renaissance has to be put in new wine bottles. But at present only the old wine bottles are available. The implication is that there is a great danger that the old bottles themselves will pollute the African Renaissance. If there is going to be any genuine African Renaissance, it

has to be preceded by a revolution that will break down the old colonial structures and establish the new.

Abdul-Rashid Na'Allah again visits the issue of language in the prospects for the African Renaissance. He thinks renaissance will move forward only when the language issue is addressed. He cites post-apartheid South Africa, which has a dual language policy: language for business, and language for education. This contrasts with Nigerian leaders still speaking to each other in English—which many Nigerians don't understand. He suggests that, at the local level, Africans have to use their own native languages in education, citing a United Nations report in 1951 which says children learn better in their own local languages..."Today local video languages can take the lead." Wole Soyinka enhances Na'Allah's suggestion stating he had suggested the adoption of the Swahili language at the continental level. "By saying, this I am not saying we stop learning English but it should go side by side with traditional languages...Languages can be a source of unity and political instrument," said Soyinka at the African Society Conference 2000.

Femi Biko (ibid) agrees with psychologist, Amos Wilson, who posits cultural borrowing need not be problematic since all cultures do it. But these borrowings, whether capitalism or computer revolution, will eventually fail if they are not based on African cultural technologies—temperament, linguistic, and spiritual software. The argument here is that the relevance of China, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan is that they did not abandon their ancestral linguistic and religious software in their development drive. "Africa cannot

advance without the decolonization of its cultural capital... For what it is worth, let us submit that Africa cannot in any way afford the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.” (ibid)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AFRICAN JOURNALIST IN THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE PROCESS

Chapter Three argued that because Africa is on its deathbed with its culture suppressed and polluted, an African Renaissance is required to spark progress. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the need for the African journalist, and invariably African media houses, to shift to a model more suited to the goals of the African Renaissance. This model must be grounded in African values and history. For this reason, all the analyses indicated in chapters 1, 2, and 3 are refracted in this chapter. We must first answer the following question: What challenges face the African journalist under the guise of the African Renaissance in a continent let down by the historical forces of slavery and colonialism and by its own elites? Tanzania's media present a case study of the formation of the African journalist. Content analyses of *New African* magazine and *expotimes.net* show how the African journalist (and media houses) is struggling to free himself/herself from Eurocentric mentality through attempts to shift his/her professional principles today. I consider the following: first, the origin of modern journalism in Africa; second, the reasoning behind the lack of African cultural and historical input in African journalistic models; third, what values shape the African journalistic model. Still, I explore the need for a *New African Journalism* model for the African journalist grounded in African history and culture that gets to the heart of Africa's problems. This last step is necessary to get rid of the layer of dirt that has prevented its modernization. Finally, I offer some prescriptions to reinvent the African journalist.

The principal objective of this chapter then, is to establish the African journalist's role in critically facilitating the African Renaissance through both reportorial and participatory means. Though traders of ideas, the African journalist (and media institutions) has to retool his/her mind in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and imagination before he/she can help facilitate the African Renaissance. The African journalist cannot extricate himself or herself from the prevailing journalism models and the forces emanating from African culture. The old models are needed to fashion out the needed new models conducive to the African Renaissance process. In this instance, according to Joel Netshitenzhe, a communications chief executive with the South African government, "As the new started to take shape, old ideas asserted themselves with greater force. But there have been instances in which, in the struggle against these old ideas, we gradually started to ignore the beam in our own eye" (2000p.3). Beclouded by the same mental slavery (from both historical and cultural reasons) Africans find themselves in, the African journalist has to first take the beam from his/her eyes before he/she can help take the beam from the eyes of Africa's struggles for progress. This means freeing himself/herself from the long-running mental slavery before he/she can embark on facilitating the African Renaissance.

To free himself/herself from such mentality, the African journalist (and his/her institutions) has to shift models from Eurocentric to Afric-centric. The need for a model shift doesn't mean the African journalist is abandoning Western models but rather using them to (re) search, re-create and enrich African value-oriented journalism models. Similarly, an inference can be drawn with respect to the crises Africa is currently

experiencing. It is explained that the African journalist (and media houses) has to borrow from the roles of the European Enlightenment thinkers during the Dark Ages (The European Enlightenment has African influences). Africa is in its Dark Ages now. The Enlightenment thinkers, whose media productions sparked the European Renaissance, were “deeply conscious of its debt to the past, yet aware at the same time of the uniqueness of its own historical moment as an age of light, and also as an age of crisis, transition and reassessment” (Gary, 1996, p.98-125 as cited by David Williams, 1999, p.1). The Enlightenment thinker, as expected of the African journalist, freed himself first from the cultural inhibitions within Europe before embarking on campaigns against the dominant negative forces prevailing then in their society. Emmanuel Kant, in an essay entitled *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* argues that the Enlightenment was the coming of age of intellectualism. Not just mere intellectualism but the ability to use it to recast the conception of a mature political community and sound cultural ends. Furthermore, like what obtained in the French Revolution, an African Enlightenment process, in the face of the African crises, calls for an unsentimental questioning of traditional African modes of thought, attitudes and social organizations. The idea is not only to do away with false and vain beliefs but put more emphasis on reasoning and history in determining Africa’s progress instead of massive intrusion of the supernatural and other unprogressive practices into the African’s thought, attitude, and social organization. This is what today’s African crises call for.

The African journalist, in the context of the African Renaissance, has to begin seeing himself/herself largely as African Enlightenment thinker, going to the roots of African

culture to unearth layers of morality and tradition that have been opposing Africa's drive to progress. For Kant, as is happening today in Africa, the "*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.*" *Immaturity* is the inability to use one's own values without the guidance of another. Immaturity continues to materialize in Africa as the continent increasingly falls under the dictatorship of international bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund whose policies are not rooted in the African culture but that of the Western world. Moreover, masters of the native African occult practices of *juju/marabou* control African elites. Simply put, Africa is being directed mostly from the outside and not from within, and even when direction comes from within, it is largely by irrational *juju/marabou* forces who are at the fringes of modernization. The African 'immaturity' is self-inflicted, due not to a lack of understanding and intelligence but from shortage of resolution and courage to act without guidance from the "outside". ¹²An Enlightenment motto was: "Have courage to use your own understanding!" This can be interpreted in today's African context as: "Have courage to use your indigenous values for understanding and progress!" Today's African journalists need courage to understand their own culture, no matter how 'primitive' or 'backward' some of the cultural practices may seem, for there are primitivity and backwardness in every culture.

¹² The average African likes to argue that there are supernatural forces in his/her society that are unseen and omnipresent. Such powers are supposed to be the cause of all mishap, pulling people and society to misfortune, yet no one seems to seriously question the desirability of such forces. In traditional Africa, where supernatural powers dominate morals and thought, it is a taboo to raise probing questions about certain cultural practices—and this makes such questioning of certain cultural practices, as Lewis Vaughn would say, "way below the radar of most journalists and the citizens they serve." In such an atmosphere, resolution and courage needed to question certain cultural practices deemed negative in relation to progress are none existent, thus perpetuating "immaturity" or the culture's growth. (See Appendix two)

The African journalist also needs the courage and intelligence to identify both the negative and the positive aspects within their culture, before he/she can discover solutions to the crises facing the African society. African media possess the incredibly powerful tools of mass communication and operate in an increasingly open global system that can help them circumvent Western ethnocentrism or refuse to bow to the West's cultural imperialism or African traditionalists bent on defending inhibiting negative cultural practices. Of concern to the African journalist is the relationship between African culture on the one hand and progress on the other. Similar concern led the Enlightenment thinkers to campaign against "chains of ignorance and error, superstition, theological dogma, and the dead hand of the clergy" as is the case now in Africa (Porter, 1990, p.5).

African journalists (and their media houses) are better equipped today than their European counterparts were during Europe's Renaissance. African media have mass communication to destroy the dated biases more rapidly and less painfully than did the European Enlightenment thinkers. In today's democratic and human rights climate, the African journalist attempts to shake off, as the European Enlightenment thinkers did, Africa's culture of irrationality, laziness, and cowardice. Put another way, African journalists have to disentangle the truly progressive African needs from illusory needs promoted ad nauseam by culture. Genuine needs must be satisfied by rational means. Social engineering by African journalists will enable a culture mired in excessive influence of the supernatural to eventually give way to rationality, returning African to its original condition. Standing at the forefront of change the African journalist can

contribute to eliminate those forces within African culture opposed to Africa's mastery of its own future.

The African journalists (and institutions) are obliged to rid society of excessive 'superstition' and other culturally inhibiting elements. The responsibilities are acquired from his/her professional principles and calling. They can expose the irrational and unhealthy cultural practices, such as the killing of twins by some African ethnic groups for the belief that twins are evil. African journalists (and their institutions) can foster a new society forged between progress and reason. They may adopt the maxim: Reason is in, witchcraft and other supernatural forces are out. Only through emancipation with the African journalist playing a continental role, can African societies pursue such ends as development grounded in unfettered reason and freedom from domination and influence of invisible forces. African journalists can promote positive African values such *ubuntu*, accountability, democracy, human rights, and a rational choice of policies. The advocating of reason and cultural empowerment by the African journalist can lead to an African enlightenment.

The reason why the African journalist should heighten his/her professional tools to bring about an African enlightenment and cultural empowerment is that he/she is confronted with the contradictory role of African intellectuals, who should have led a cultural revolution within Africa. The African intellectual is part of the media sources. Thabo Mbeki, president of South Africa and an intellectual, has described the African intellectual climate as "predatory" and largely responsible for the crises that characterize

present-day Africa. Adebayo Williams (2000, p.295-317), a Nigerian intellectual, using his own country as well as Kenya and Tanzania as case studies of African intellectuals failure to spark progress, reports the role African intellectuals played in the anti-colonial struggles for independence. He argues that African intellectuals appear to have lost their standing in present-day Africa, having succumbed to the ills of the Western world spilling over to Africa and pollutions within the African culture.

The African intellectual is seen as corrupt, supportive of dictators and bad governments, and confused about Africa's development. He or she is seen as contributing to a divisive and tribalistic Africa, and, therefore, to civil wars and paralyses engulfing the continent today. The end result is a devalued status in the eyes of the African population—all of which translates into the African crises. As Adebayo observes, corroborating Said (1983) and Julien Benda, the situation in Africa is called "the treason of the intellectual." This opens up the need for the African journalist to reinvent himself/herself in order to help empower the African Renaissance.

The African journalist must never lose sight of the modern perversities of Africa, and must reposition himself/herself as cultural beacons of light, and act as an inspiration for today's backward African intellectual culture. Some of this repackaging (as can be seen from early pro-independence crusaders such Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who worked selflessly to gain independence from colonial rule) of the African journalist will demand new qualities such as deeply enhanced nationalism informed by the shame and pains Africa had gone through, bravery in the face of the seemingly insurmountable problems,

deeper knowledge of the African Renaissance ideology, deep drinking of African culture and history, and thorough grasp of both the internal and external forces impacting on Africa's existence, among others. The history of African intellectuals reveal them as succumbing to the blandishments of powerful states, confused, arrogant, demeaning of African values (an orchestration of the colonialists notion of African values), jockeying to be capitulated to tribalistic factions of the ruling class, itself the subject of controversy, bitter arguments, dabblers of *juju*, and destruction as Liberia under the late President Samuel Doe demonstrate. The apparent 'darkness' Africa finds itself in today could be interpreted as the 'darkness' of its intellectuals, for come to think of it, intellectuals are the cultural directors of any society. The African journalist is part of the rotten intellectual class, and can free himself/herself by adhering strictly to his/her professional principles such as objectivity, fairness, balance, added to his/her calling as a journalist. This will enable him/her to stand above the blandishments of powerful states and the divisive forces emanating from within.

Globalization and the crises coming from within Africa itself is transforming Africa, through international communication networks which is the main motor driving this transformation. As a result, the African journalist can see the realities, prospects, and problems of Africa much more clearly than had been previously possible. That is to say they now have a better understanding of African culture, and correspondingly, the constraints within African culture that have been preventing Africa's mastery of its future. Thus, creating a vacuum for creative and informed solutions.

The most important challenge then, is for African journalists to provide the badly needed cultural transfusion of knowledge from African culture itself and enabling aspects of the new global culture to the ailing African society. Can African journalism answer the question posed by Cameroon's development expert, Daniel Etounga-Manguelle: "Does Africa Need a Cultural Adjustment Program?" If Africa needs a cultural adjustment program then invariably the African journalist needs that too. What role should the African journalist play in ushering in this transformation of Africa culture? Moreover, what tools do the African journalist have at his/her disposal to help remedy such cultural sicknesses as female genital mutilation, low social capital, and other practices such as human sacrifice. Not to mention other unhealthy customary practices; practices which are increasingly intruding into Africa's public sphere, and consequentially, stifling Africa's progress. On the other hand, how can the African journalist's (and media institutions) tools be used to de-freeze the positive cultural elements for progress?

The two primary weaknesses of African journalism have been: firstly, the way in which journalism came to Africa, through colonialism; and secondly, the fact that African journalism has focused too much on issues which have not served Africa's core interests. Specifically, they have traditionally focused on politics, personalities, and the real or perceived forces of Western imperialism. This focus has been to the detriment of critical journalistic scrutiny of African culture not only in its reportorial roles but in its investigative and educational roles as well.

The African Renaissance gives the African mass media the platform to thaw the cultural freeze and speed up its progress. The African journalist can do this by transcending ethnocentrism and facilitating fair discussion of the link between culture and progress. All of this is “To acknowledge the opposition to our self-determination, but also to reverse the tendency to portray ourselves as hapless victims of plots by foreign forces” (Netshitenzhe, 1999, p.3). The African journalist may play the normal roles of educator, agenda-setter, advocate, investigator, informer, and conscience of the people, but how well positioned are they to transmit and participate in the rebirth of the African culture and its appropriation of the global culture? Moreover, how is the African journalist going to nurture the renaissance process?

Journalism has different meanings and purposes in different cultures. At the present level of capitalist development in the West, Western culture can afford some degree of luxury in its definition of and exceptions in journalism; the same degree may be centrifugal and detrimental when transplanted verbatim in the African environment. Western journalism is focused on the protection and enhancement of the competitive values of liberal democratic culture. The focus of African journalism is on compromise, cooperation, and consensus, characteristic of the consensual democracy of African social formations. Generally, in Western culture, journalism essentially deals with informing and reporting events. Actions are scrutinized critically. Journalists should, as Paletz and Entman (1981:10) explain, “gather, publish, and purvey news that is factual, fair, impartial, objective, favouring no person, party, policy, or system.” In the course of its reporting and informing, journalism’s roles include teaching, educating, assisting in forming

consciousness, agenda-setting, advocating, investigating, acting as public voice, commenting on ideas and events, and influencing public opinion.

G. Stuart Adam, a former journalism teacher and currently Vice President (Academic) of Carleton University, in an interview with me, said the bottom line of journalism, among other functions, is the conferral of judgments on issues. But this judgment may be shortsighted since certain forces in cultures such as Africa's may be marginalized by the international system. Adams argues that journalism is the application of the values the journalist uses to judge issues, and those values are reflected in the selection of stories and in the judgments conferred by journalists on how well the issues they reveal is working. Poor judgment occurs when the journalist's indigenous values do not inform his/her judgment of the local subjects. The trouble with the African journalist is that his/her conferral of judgment of African subjects is uninformed by African values but by the imposed Western values which have come about because of the education he/she has received through colonialism. On the other hand, despite the journalist's imagination being an expression of his/her culture, the education the African journalist has had, and is having, makes his imagination not expressed by his/her African culture but rather that of the Western world. Despite the observation that journalists work individually, in reality, they operate in and are influenced by cultural environments they did not create. However, journalists are bound to enrich these cultural environments as they seek to destroy all ills within the culture and enhance the good ones. As Adam suggests, this will come about when the journalist, more acutely in the African context, not only record what is

happening in society or narrate stories or confers judgment but appropriate all these roles as a “reformist” of the culture for the good life.

The African journalist operates effectively in both the African and the global environments. A critical assessment both the African and the global environment is necessary, otherwise the African journalist may not distinguish between local and global culture; hence, blinding him/her from looking deeply within African culture to find out the sources blocking Africa’s mastery of its future. Because African journalists have been trained largely in the West or locally with the blueprints of Western syllabi, they tend to operate within the definition, purpose, and influence of European culture. The dawn of the African Renaissance means journalism in Africa has to be redefined within the context of African culture. Structures and functions require a nationalist bent toward the development aspirations of the African peoples in whose interest they are to serve. Although undeniably influenced by global culture, Africa’s structures and functions must first be brought under the ambit of African culture. Hence the need for a paradigm shift which will enable African journalists to better see the negative and positive elements within the culture.

Western culture regards competition and freedom of speech as integral to its culture. African culture considers such values secondary to the more important values of human dignity, survival of community as a whole (as against excessive individualism), cooperation, compromise, and consensus and mobilization of the productive forces for the achievement of nationalist objectives. Because African culture is based on

communalism rather than on methodological individualism and the market theory of value prevalent in Western culture, competition is regarded in African culture as an invitation to the devil to induce envy and selfishness, and create a climate of abject poverty and tribal hatred. Freedom of speech is only one aspect of human dignity and not the most important since it can lead to slanderous behaviour and many other social ills. Indeed, even in Western culture, the law limits freedom of speech.

THE COLONIAL MEDIA AND AFRICA CULTURE

In this context, a brief review of the history of African journalism will demonstrate the need for a fundamental change in the professional attitude of the African journalist, thereby enabling the African journalist to assist in the needed changes within African culture. The review will enable us to ascertain the reasons why the African journalist, since Africa's independence from the colonialists, have not worked to destroy the forces in African culture opposed to modernization and simultaneously expose the long suppressed positive ones for policy planning.

The mass media in Africa was a colonial creation, used by the colonialists to the detriment of African values and the interests of the local population. The press was used to promote the ideals of the colonial settlers, ignoring the locals and focusing mainly on the settler community. Where indigenous African people were featured at all, "it was either to convert them or keep them from "straying". Media coverage during the early colonial period focused mainly on the colonialists' home news and news about the social affairs of the white settlers in Africa. One way to overcome the tremendous loneliness felt by the white settlers in Africa was to keep abreast of the latest developments in

politics and fashions in their homelands ((Nwosu et al, 1995, p.152; Arnold S. de Beer et al, 1995, p.215; de Beer et al cite Martin, 1991, p.159; Ziegler&Asante, 1992, p.23, 24).

THE PRESENT SITUATION AND AFRICAN CULTURE

Post-independent African governments continued with the practices of the colonialists such as: draconian press laws, the legacy of single-party governments, or party ownership of the mass media and lack of incisively critical discussion of the African culture in relation to Africa's progress. These practices were done in an atmosphere of contempt for Western values, for fear of cultural imperialism. But neither did the African regimes look equally or critically at the African values and interests of the local population. The foregoing is paradoxical because African politicians used the media to accelerate decolonization. When African media invoked African culture, it was solely in praise of its arts and its aesthetic beauty. The media glossed over the deficiencies of the cultural rhythms; they overlooked culture as the soul of African society. Therefore, the media implicitly opposed Africa's mastery of its future.

Post-colonial African governments were one-party brands, similar in function to the no-party colonial system. The system became increasingly closed in the face of mounting adverse political, cultural, economic, health, and social conditions. De Beer et al cite Anyaoku (1994, p.3) that in the mid-1990s:

a fallen standard, with hardly any defenders left...As an instrument of political management, the one-party state has been a factor of retardation as far as economic growth is concerned and a dead hand on the flowering of personal liberty [as well as media freedom and journalistic enterprise] (p.211)

Still, de Beer et al (p.211-212) report that in 1994, at an International Press Institute Meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, Henrikas Yushkiavitchus, Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics of UNESCO, stated that:

The press has always been important in the political life of African countries, and so have been journalists. Such leaders as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Felix Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire and Leopold Senghor were leading journalists who established or edited newspapers and other publications, criticized colonial policies and advocated political independence. They became political leaders, but as a rule they exercised excessive control over the media and did not make any modifications in the structure and orientation of the media to make them effective for development (p.4-5)

The 1990s have been described as the dawn of democratic changes in Africa, but such changes have not translated into broader freedoms and human rights. Democracy is in name only; African peoples are prevented from participating effectively in the political process. They cannot control their destinies and governments remain omnipotent vis-à-vis the media in all 54 African states. Governments continue to harass the private media.

Several factors contribute to the climate of obstacles facing the African journalist that have blocked him/her from venturing into serious culture deliberations and lack of positive imagination of the African culture. Some of these factors are: censorship; the muzzling of the press; poor salaries; poor training and education; influence of tribalistic

tendencies; newspapers being forced out of business, or denied access to newsprint or distribution; and the killing of journalists in places like Rwanda and Sierra Leone (where more journalists were killed in the year 2000 than anywhere in the world, according to the latest report by the Committee to Protect Journalists). As Celestine Monga argues, in *Anthropology of Anger* (1996, p.367), "access to public media in Africa always was, and still is, denied to any group challenging the existing authorities. In most countries the laws either implicitly or explicitly allow censorship."

In an atmosphere of such internecine battle between governments and the media both public and private media practitioners are incapable of reflecting on serious socio-cultural problems – for instance, low social capital – that obstruct progress. They merely play the traditional functions of reporting. Moreover, the positive aspects of African culture have to be exposed to influence public policy. Under current conditions, preoccupation of the press with fighting draconian government regulation and playing hide and seek with governments makes it too difficult to build media systems concerned with the real issues in the African culture. This atmosphere will improve when the African Renaissance campaigns saturate Africa, democracy, human rights and greater freedom grow and press councils/tribunals gain foot, as we are seeing in Ghana today and South Africa. But it has to be noted that this will not come in a silver platter, as Nigerian journalists (and media houses) will tell you, but through struggle.

Such a stifled internal flow of information under elites who had previously blamed the colonialists for doing much of the same thing, begs the question of Africa's demand for a New World Information Order. In such a poisonous atmosphere, it is difficult for the media to look critically at the indigenous culture within which it operates. Furthermore, the current climate challenges the unearthing of forces within the culture that oppose Africa's modernization, and hinders chances for a prosperous and just society.

WHAT MODELS SHAPE AFRICAN JOURNALISM TODAY

The underlying cause of the conflicts between African governments and private media are values. What values? *Ubuntu*, the balance between the physical and the metaphysical, human rights, African cultural unity, democracy, accountability, equity, trust, "African solution to African problems," fairness, justice, rule of law, and many more. The values and history of a society shape the models and philosophies of journalism and mass communication. Michael Schudson, a leading journalism scholar, sees news as a form of culture that he describes as "public knowledge," describing news as "the modern, omnipresent brand of shared knowing" (Schudson, 1995, p.3 as cited by Hachten, 1998, p.2).

Problems they seek to tackle dictate journalism models or problems facing society such as the current African crisis. The culture of societies then, directs journalistic or mass communication values. The varying journalistic models reflect the values and problems of the societies from which they came. Each of these models is dictated simultaneously by society's cultural values and problems. Whichever journalistic model is used, hopefully, the outcome will see a society's values enriched and the obstacles preventing

progress removed or minimized. Models direct the way journalists' function as reporters, interpreters, teachers, investigators, entertainers, agenda-setters, conscience of the people, directors of civilization, spiritualists, maintainers of the social contract, and thinkers. These functions could be changing depending on the social and cultural dynamics. In *The Canadian Reporter* (1994), Carman Cumming and Catherine McKercher postulate that "a rough consensus exists among Western journalists on ethical values and behaviour. The makeup of this consensus is complex, fascinating—and dynamic" (p.369). They argue that these values have changed over the past hundred years, so that different generations of journalists "wrestle with the conflicts that inevitably arise in the course of their work."

More than ever, African journalists unconsciously wrestle with the inevitable crises of values refracted back from their culture and wrestle to minimize anti-imperialist rantings of the past. Similarly, their predecessors, who turned out to be leaders immediately after independence, were forced to take a good look in the mirror (but did not) during the one-party and no-party military juntas of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Consequently, excess blame was heaped on outside forces for their problems and those journalists failed to destroy all pollutants within African culture and expose the positive aspects for development.

European media has fostered a culture of nourishment to help their societies succeed. The excessive blaming of outside forces for Africa's problems left the early leaders unable to correct the wrong labeling of Africans values; in particular, the notion by the colonialists

that Africans naturally occupy the most primitive stage of development. As a result, it was doubly difficult to promote African values related to developmental goals.

Journalistic philosophies are formed by society's values, struggles, and the problems they purport to solve. A society's journalistic philosophies, or models, also tell us the nature of the operation of the journalistic systems at both the national and regional levels, to draw a parallel to Africa. These philosophies help to understand the way systems define the attitude, shared learning, and stake in the new international communication networks. These philosophical underpinnings can provide a conceptual structure for critically measuring the media performance, whatever the nature of the cultural system in which a society's media operate. This 'African-values' shortcoming in journalism reveals the difficulty of measuring African values in the African journalist's work.

The *Four Theories of the Press*, as postulated by the Siebert-Perterson-Schramm typology, consists of authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and the Soviet Communist models. All are configured by the values and history of their societies, as well as by the various developmental paths they want to pursue, despite the increasingly shrinking global arena. Briefly, the authoritarian model, developed in 16th-17th century Europe by the monarchy's absolute power, aims to support the state and leadership via control of the press, owned by either the ruler, the party, or private persons. The two primary thinkers behind this model are Hegel and Machiavelli. Present-day Iran exemplifies the authoritarian model. The communist press of the 20th century is a mutation of the authoritarian model, which aimed to serve the people and the Marxist

system. The press criticizes the communist party objectives of China, Cuba and North Korea at their peril (Lambeth, p.4-17).

The libertarian model grew in 17th century England and spread to the Western world. This model sprung from the Enlightenment--natural rights, aiming to find truth, inform, interpret, and entertain. The state and the media are separate, and there is no censorship.¹³ Owners in a free market of ideas control the media. Forerunners to the libertarian model include Locke, Milton, Mill, and Adam Smith. Other examples of libertarian thinking are found in the United States, Japan and Germany.

From the libertarian model came the social responsibility model, largely a United States creation, via the Commission on Freedom of the Press and other opponents of the libertarian model who viewed it as supporters of particular group and not the entire community. The social responsibility model aims to inform, educate, and further social progress. The press is open to the public, controlled by community opinion and consumer action and by codes of ethics and press councils, but the press is grounded in the philosophy that social responsibility of the media is more important than its so-called freedom. Private rights are respected, although private ownership often carries the threat of government interference to assure public service¹⁴ (Lambeth, p.4-17).

¹³ Freedom of the press did not place obligation on the press to be honest or ethical. It grounded any such vision on human nature under the Enlightenment campaigns, which envisioned people as ultimately rational beings. Hence, censorship or self-righting process on the part of the press.

¹⁴ In this instance, unlike libertarianism, Theodore Peterson (1963) offers that society required "a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning." Here accuracy ruled, and facts have to be identified as facts and opinion identified so. All this wrapped around objective reporting, freed from the political powers of the publisher.

The Scandinavian countries of Finland, Denmark and Sweden, and much of Western Europe, have a model called democratic socialism. Democratic socialism is a reasonable facsimile to social responsibility. Democratic socialism believes it is government's role to promote both the freedom of the media and citizen access to the press. Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe are envious of democratic socialism (Lambeth, p.4-17).

Democratic socialism has mutated into models such as advocacy journalism, public/civic journalism and "advancing" or developmental press. Briefly, the advocacy model is an agenda-setting, objective practice demanding detachment (to get all sides of the story). Civic journalism attempts to connect the community to the press or civic involvement of the media by promoting a framework of healthy democracy (Glassner, 1999).

Advancing journalism, according to Herbert Altschull and Edmund Lambeth, is a Third World, developing-countries model, having a Western mix because of colonialism. In the African context, "advancing" journalism lacks heavy indigenous values input. The government or a political party controls the media under this model. Journalists are unifiers; they serve the 'truth' (more appropriately half-truth) chunked out by the regime. They are socially responsible in so far as they sycophantically serve either one-party or military juntas. Journalists are educated in the political doctrine of an undemocratic one-party system, or through the dogma of military juntas (for example, the Ghanaian press in 1979 under Flight Lieutenant John Jerry Rawlings or the Tanzanian press under the one-party system of President Julius Nyerere).¹⁵ The press is expected to be a forum for two-

¹⁵ The press here, despite its pretensions, practices negative objectivity in that it is vulnerable to half-truth. Since the public is fed with half-truth, they do not completely understand events that are shallow and

way exchange, something rarely seen in the authoritarian African political system. The policies directing the “advancing” journalism model are the development of the state’s economic infrastructure and the fight against hunger, illiteracy, and ill health, but the contrary is the case as corruption booms and poverty and illiteracy is the order of the day in Africa.

THE CASE OF TANZANIA

Tanzania, a former Marxist state, typifies the fast-shifting model of African journalism and the gradual movement towards incorporating, though weak for now, African values and elements of global journalism—truth, objectivity, fairness, dignity, and human rights. Altschull (p.244-245) reports that under President Julius Nyerere, the state placed severe censorship on radio and television but not on newspapers. With no homegrown training institutions, Tanzanian journalists were trained largely in “Marxist-Leninist interpretations of the press” in Moscow and counterattacked foreign propaganda. Simultaneously, the media practiced a mixture of libertarianism and communist press models. Instead of embracing conflict, the Tanzanian press opted for co-operation. This practice killed objectivity and accuracy in the deeper realm of the press’s social reality. The Tanzanian press was confused, for a clearly total libertarianism would have cleared their heads, and fostered objectivity and accuracy. It didn’t know where, or how, to look within its culture to find what was opposing the country’s mastery of its future. The Tanzanian press also had difficulty erasing colonial distortions of its indigenous values and replacing said values with appropriate African values. New thinking heralded

incomplete. This situation makes the journalists difficult to be impartial and at the same time interpret events. As social responsibility theory offers, human rationality only is not enough and that people being lazy have to be goaded into truth from the maze of lies by the press, which are supposed to be part of the

President Nyerere's departure from office in 1985, as the country shifted from a one-party socialist regime to open, multi-party democracy. Out of office, Nyerere admitted making mistakes in a society where the media was totally under the ambit of his regime. He suggested the formation of opposition political parties and private media in the country's new political dispensation. The idea here is to open the Tanzanian society, once closed, to forces of progress and free the Tanzanian spirit from years of enclosure. The realization here, to quote Richard Barnet, a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C, "is the building of democratic institutions and a mass media compatible with local culture and traditions" in the entire sub-Sahara Africa. Only in this climate can the media have the breathing space to go to the roots of African culture to eradicate practices preventing modernization. The issue here in the context of this thesis isn't necessarily more of mass media outlets but how the African mass media is reconciled with local culture and tradition—Nigeria has always had a vibrant mass media, but without reconciling it with local Nigerian tradition and culture.

THE CASE FOR A SHIFT IN PARADIGM

Journalistic practices sympathetic to local African culture and traditions are as essential as the need to shift development paradigms from Eurocentric to Afric-centric. This will entail a re-definition of ends. Afric-centric paradigm would tinker with the Eurocentric but the totality will be African in order to be meaningful. The history of African journalism, the crises facing Africa today, and the onset of the African Renaissance set the stage for this need. In *Journalism in an Age of Mass Media Globalization* Hermant Shah (1997, p.3) suggests changes be made to the prevailing models of journalism in

more alert elements of society. This is positive objectivity. And this is what will be required of the African

relation to Third World countries, of which African countries form a reasonable bulk.

Writing during the 9th MacBride Roundable discussion, Shah indicates:

A particular method of reporting and writing, which evolved in Europe and North America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, has become the prevalent model of journalism throughout the world. James Carey has described this model in the following way: "Journalism...is an industrial art. The inverted pyramid, the 5 W's lead, and associated techniques are as much a product of industrialization as tin cans."

Essentially, this prevailing model emphasizes "objectivity" and neutral observation; letting the "facts" speak for themselves; and heavy use of officials and experts as sources and attributions. It is a model that results in journalism that describes events with little analysis, relies upon polls and statistics to show social trends but without providing historical context, and provides no vehicle of expression for ordinary people at the grassroots level.

It is precisely the type of journalism that serves the interests of the owners of the global mass media firms because it avoids deeper questions about the exercise of power, the dispensation of social justice, and the prospects for cultural survival. Raising these types of issues under the prevailing model of journalism is difficult because it would force the journalism profession to jettison the notion of neutral detached, "industrial" reporting.

This situation exists in Africa today, thus preventing deeper questions enabling the African journalist to go to the heart of African culture to help remove the unprogressive cultural mud that has prevented African society from moving into modernization. This type of industrial journalism, juxtaposed with the current African status quo: wars, corruption, and the disturbing boom in occult practices and its insidious influence on the elites, will do little to "facilitate deliberations and discussion of pressing social concerns

journalist as he/she handles serious African cultural issues.

of the day...”(Shah, p.3). These concerns are the rational and the negative, inhibiting elements within African culture.

The creation of African nation-states by European colonialists, entailing the imposition of the European development paradigm on Africa without recourse to African culture and history exacerbated matters. The African media has difficulty facilitating deliberations and discussions of pressing African concerns. The African development dilemma applies also to its mass communication practices. Mass communication models used in Africa do not reflect its values, history, and struggles. The evolutionary paradigm reveals western communication values in Africa. Under this paradigm, development and communication are seen as “a set of interdependent processes through which a ‘traditional’ social structure like Africa’s is transformed into a ‘modern’ social structure” like the United States (Rhodes, 1970 as cited by Peter Nwosu, 1995, p.13). The evolutionary paradigm envisions Africa, and other under-developed societies, as transformed from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ society through communication applications.

The reason for the imposition of the dominant, Western paradigm on Africa was that the economic patterns and social forces that transformed Europe into modern states could be copied in traditional societies like Africa with the right dose of technical and economic assistance (Nwosu, p.16). The core thinking here was that economic growth through capital-intensive technology, especially that of communication, will spark rapid “changes in all interrelated aspects of the underdeveloped nation’s economy, including the shaping of new cultural values” (Wang et al as cited by Nwosu, 1995, p.16). The weakness of the

development-media model is that it did not take into consideration local conditions and local culture. Had it, all the inhibiting and positive elements within African culture would have been exposed, making policy easier to shape rooted in African values.

The other development and communication paradigm that has influenced Africa since independence is the socialist, or Marxist, model as practiced in Tanzania (under President Julius Nyerere) and Angola, where there was a centrally planned research and dissemination approach. Communication and development strategies were derived from either a trickle-down or top-down (socialist) model. The weakness of this model is that it is highly centralized, one-dimensional, blind to other views, and lacks democratic elements since people do not participate in the creation of development programs that affect them—in short, unfair (Ugboajah, 1986 as cited by Nwuso, 1995, p.43).

Despite the Marxist model's shortcomings and criticisms of Western paradigms imposed on Africa, these paradigms have remained dominant in development communication planning in Africa since the 1950s, influencing foreign policies of developed nations and international loans to Africa. For now, there is no alternative to the Western-derived or the Marxist/socialist development communication models prevailing in Africa because of Africa media scholars have not thought seriously about their culture in relation to communication models. No serious African culture-sensitive model, or Afric-centric model of development and communication appears imminent despite the unfitness of the two models currently available to the African environment. Molefe Kete Asante (1980, "Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change" as cited by Nwuso, 1995, p.46) talks of

Afrocentricity as the motor of Africa's "regeneration." However, this concept is yet to take hold in African development and communication planning. Nwosu also believes that some aspects of the Western, dominant paradigm and the Marxist/socialist model can be adapted to the African environment. Further research is needed as to how African cultural traits can be integrated with Western and Marxist approaches to development. In an increasingly interdependent and interactive world, the sooner this happens, the better for the African Renaissance process.

THE CASE OF *NEW AFRICA* MAGAZINE AND *EXPOTIMES.NET*

The *New African* newsmagazine, established in 1960, is a monthly based in London, United Kingdom. This magazine covers the entire African continent in areas ranging from news, culture, economics and markets, health, science and technology, to sport, fashion, entertainment, travel and leisure, book reviews, the arts, and the environment. The magazine is not afraid to be critical. The beginning of 1999 saw a new editor, Ghanaian-born Baffour Ankomah succeed the British-born, Alan Rake.

Baffour gave his correspondents new editorial guidelines entitled "The Shape of Things to Come." On page 3, entitled "Reporting Africa", he urged correspondents to pay attention to how they are to report their respective African countries, since the world media, including his magazine, has presented Africa as a basket case. "Every country has its positive and negative side. And as we all know, Africa is more than the wars. Africa has its good side too. And we ought to reflect this in our reporting... Recently, I asked one British writer why Brazil has "rainforests" and Africa a "jungle." The two are basically

the same. Why one is rainforest and the other is a jungle is a challenge and education we, at *New African*, have to give people.”

The magazine’s guidelines give examples of the world media’s Eurocentric views, especially Western European views when reporting on Africa. To break away from such an image, the magazine has shifted its editorial stance concentrating cover stories on African history and culture in a revisionist way. Examples of such include “*Did Columbus Discover America?...Africans had been there before him!*” (January, 2001.No.392) and “*Ancient Egypt: Africa’s stolen legacy*” (October, 2000.No.389). Taking such a stance has allowed the magazine to be sensitive to any report in the international media portraying African cultural practices as negative. A typical example is the magazine’s coverage of President Charles Taylor of Liberia suing *The Times* of London, U.K for reviewing a new book, *Mask of Anarchy*, by Stephen Ellis, former editor of the London, U.K-based *African Confidential*.

According to *The Times* the *Mask of Anarchy* alleged that the former warlord-turned politician oversaw the creation of a specialized unit of killers known as the Top 20, of which Taylor was a director. This specialized unit was responsible for the killing and dissection of many Liberians during Taylor’s ruthless quest for political power. Apparently, specific individuals were selected for human sacrifice and consumption; a practice some Liberian ethnic groups believe confers power on the participants. Many of these bloody rituals were allegedly carried out in Charles Taylor’s residence. *New Africa*, quoting an unnamed Taylor loyalist, said *The Times* “can’t prove it, yet it ran willy nilly

because it knows African leaders can be ridiculed at will, and for free. That must stop” (*New Africa*, January, 2000, p.14-15).

The *New African* revision of African history is laudable, especially if viewed from its educational role, but its coverage of African culture, especially seeing nothing wrong with the culture or seeing any objective criticism of the culture as ethnocentric, is not healthy for Africa’s progress.¹⁶ The revision undermines debate calling for an African cultural revolution under the African Renaissance process. In contrast to the *New African*, the online newspaper *expotimes.net* has been attempting to interpret African events from its culture. Argued Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, editor of *expotimes.net* in an interview in London, U.K, “ We seek to expose both the positive and negative aspects of the African culture for critical discussions in relation to Africa development. We are convinced beyond all reasonable doubt that the African crises results both from internal cultural inhibitions and external factors such as slave trade and colonialism. The external factors is fully known now by Africans but I don’t think Africans are aware that the inner cultural troubles fully...We undertake this venture without fear of sparking accusations of ethnocentrism. We are attempting to empower culturally the African.” *Expotimes.net* has done this by exposing the negative layers of African culture and enhancing the positive aspects, using the tenets of global journalism, more especially information

¹⁶ In a telephone interview, Baffour Ankomah argued that how one views whether an African value is negative is relative. He said certain negativity within African values has to be viewed historically, such as the colonialists’ use of Africans against each other, mentioning historian William Lynch’s thesis. He cited the culture of PHD, pull him down, as a case. He said the colonialists’ divide-and-rule tactics created a culture of PHD. He asks anybody to compare this to the core African communal principle where everybody is everybody’s keeper and not destroyer. “In the original African communal context there is no PHD,” he thundered. He suggests letting Africans know the roots of PHD and understanding its implications in Africa’s progress can solve the PHD problem. This, he argued, directs his new editorial policy. He revealed

technology. The foregoing is demonstrated in the long-running series under the column entitled *Voodoo Rule in Africa*.¹⁷ In this series, African elites are shown dabbling in African *juju* and have failed to appropriate the healthy African values in policies and development. Mass irrationality stifling progress results from their interference in the public sphere. The series sees *juju* as partly responsible for most of the crises in Africa, similar to the circumstances in Europe 2000 years ago that led to the Enlightenment. The *expotimes.net* has condemned African interpretation of any event by the supernatural. Thus, the *expotimes.net* is in the forefront of campaigns against excessive irrationality, false, and vain dogma in African society and the touting of positive African values for the continent's developmental goals. The *expotimes.net* is attempting at destroying all within African culture opposed to Africa's mastery of its future, a future freed from unnecessary cultural burden, fear, and tension.

A NEW MODEL FOR THE AFRICAN JOURNALIST

The battle in Africa today is a battle over values—campaigns against *juju*, civil wars, the balance between the physical and the metaphysical, the erosion of African communalism, the anti-corruption and human rights crusades, *ubuntu*, and campaigns for freedom. Additionally, there are attempts to emancipate African women as property of men, and there is mobilization of youth against their waste, rule of law, equity, and sustainable democratic culture. The African media must reposition themselves to coordinate the

that judging from readers' response to his new African values orientated editorial policy, Africans love it, and especially letters he has been receiving from east and southern Africa.

¹⁷ The initial title of the series, as written by me, was "*Juju Rule in Africa*" but the editor of *expotimes.net* changed it to *Voodoo Rule in Africa* in order to attract readers and raise 'controversy' with the view of engaging Africans in the debate of their culture. My central aim in creating the long-running series is to reconnect to the African peoples culturally by giving them the tools to wake up from their cultural lethargy and encourage them to use their rationality. The vision here is for the African to use his/her positive freedom to see, without fear of ethnocentrism, both the powerful negative forces embedded within his/her culture and the positive ones needed to shape policy and free it from colonial mindset.

communication and the refereeing of this new value game. This calls for a *New African Journalism* derived from African history and culture as well as by the global culture. It is a new journalistic philosophy born out of Africa's crises, out of Africa's struggles, out of Africa's history, out of Africa's culture, out of Africa's experiences, out of Africa's lack of mastery of its future. Its genre also comes out of the various journalism and mass communication models used in Africa today. It adds to the existing media structure through such new structures as the Internet but simultaneously enhances the functions of the African journalist because of the inclusion of serious cultural issues under the African Renaissance process. Also, the *New African Journalism* calls for redefinition of qualities such as bravery, nationalist aspirations, deep respect for Africa's culture and history, providing the intellectual tools needed for the African public to deal with many a negative cultural practices, and a thorough grasp of the African environment against the negative forces of globalization.

With mandate already embedded in African states' statutory structures, other legislations, human rights commissions, press commissions and the growing regional press organizations such as the vibrant West African Journalists' Association (WAJA) and Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the inspiration of African journalists (and media houses) under the *New African Journalism* come from within the African Renaissance process. Indirectly, the global setting has shared the mandate and inspiration. International media watchdogs and institutions like the Paris, France based *Reporters Without Borders* help not only African journalists and media houses in various ways but also raise the alarm when journalists are violated and muzzled by undemocratic forces.

The *New African Journalism* sees Africa through an African lens, assisted by elements of global journalism. Here, the African journalist becomes a juggler, balancing tenets of global journalism and African values such as communalism and economic exchange, the extended family system, and a holistic life of physical and metaphysical balance.

Informed by African realities and foreign journalistic models, should the African journalist try to simultaneously serve the truth while supporting the state and leadership? Or should the African journalist at the same time find truth, inform, interpret, entertain, educate, judge, help social progress and serve the people under the auspices of the African Renaissance? How is the African journalist to juggle modern press freedom and African tradition? Criticizing the traditional kings, queens and “Big Men,” will clash with the power structure. What a dilemma!

The answer to these questions lies in the African journalist’s ability to reinvent himself/herself under the forces emanating from the African Renaissance process. This means the African journalist drinking deep the African culture in order to understand the positive and negative values and juggling them with elements of global journalism. The juggle will enable African mass media to see better the cultural forces (both local and global) at play and use them for their work. For instance, by understanding the African notion of coexistence with their environment, which were disturbed by colonialism, the African media will be able to report how fair the African is with the environment, in a world where science and technology is increasingly intruding into nature, with its dare

consequences flashing on the face of humanity. This will equip the African journalist to find the truth in the African Renaissance context and handle the confrontations that will emanate from modern press freedom or principles, the African tradition and the power structure.

Take a look at the southern African state of Swaziland's constitutional monarchy and the country's *Times* newspaper. The newspaper reported that the third wife of King Mswati, in a culture of traditional polygamy, dropped out of school. In the spirit of African tradition, Swazi elders told the newspaper owners and the editor to stop any reports about the King's wife. The newspaper repeated reports about the wife's educational failings. The Swazi monarch found it demeaning and arrested the editor and sued him, accusing him of defamation. "The constitution the country started with after independence from Britain in 1968 placed checks on royal power, but Mswati's father, Sohuza 11, scrapped it in 1973" (*The Economist*, December 19th, 1998, p.79). The *Times* should have obtained perspectives from both sides about the King's new wife and the monarchy to get a balanced story. But the point is moot: African culture does not allow open criticism of traditional leaders, so it is unlikely someone so close to the King would venture an opinion other than one supporting the King.

Hopefully, some of the tools of the *New African Journalism* model (accuracy, objectivity, African culture and history) will provide the necessary credibility in dealing with controversial African traditional issues, such as the Swaziland case.¹⁸ Until such time,

¹⁸ At a deeper level, most of the global values such as human rights, justice, rule of law, freedom, and dignity are all embedded in African culture but were not allowed to grow fully because of the twin evils of

Africa's movement toward modernization will be on hold. In the *New African Journalism*, the king, or any African "Big Man," becomes as accountable to the people and the state as anybody.

Already, signs exist that such press freedom and tradition will co-operate, as the case below reveals between the Asantehene of Ghana and his paramount chiefs.

The new Asantehene (king) of Ghana, Otumfuo Osei Tutu the 2nd, has warned his paramount chiefs against bribery and corruption, and told them to adapt to modernization, threatening police force against them. Such a statement had never before been heard in Ghana, and most African states, from a traditional king, though clashes have occurred between central governments and traditional rulers, whom governments see as obstacles to modernization. A culture hostile to modernization (which doesn't necessarily mean Westernization) could cast the African journalist in a biased light, or considered an agent of Western cultural imperialism. The African journalist's biggest threat comes from African traditionalists, who are bent on maintaining cultural practices opposed to modernization. The African Renaissance process gives the African journalist the ammunition to overcome such cultural obstacles that are deemed to obstruct Africa's progress.¹⁹

Atlantic slave trade and colonialism, and Africans own attitude after independence. I call this lack of cultural photosynthesis, a process whereby a culture, such as Africa's, dose not get enough 'sunlight' or is not exposed to enough 'sunlight' for the growth of its inner values. For this reason, the appropriation of global values by the African journalist are just merely reconnecting to their ancient inner morals and customs, and not necessarily borrowing from any alien values. Accountability or good governance, as being preached by the World Bank, among other international agencies, is as African as it is Asian or European or Latino; no more, no less.

¹⁹ Juju/marabou occult art, unarguably grand magnetic force of the African mind and morals, have to be questioned now that the culture is opened for business under the African Renaissance process without fear

Working in the shadow of African traditionalists, fairness, evenhandedness and objectivity may be difficult though not impossible to achieve. Once again, the African mass media will be able to handle any seeming contradictions in this context by being a juggler of values, as stated earlier. The African journalist must try to achieve the foregoing using modern professional ethics and regulations. By providing news of morals and customs opposed to Africa's progress, and news of the morals and customs needed in policy formulation, the African journalist provides perspective. African people will stay abreast of significant events in today's world, and be kept informed of inhibiting factors to progress, such as blind notion floated by the colonialists that Africans do not have one common culture and, therefore, are incompatible culturally.

Distinguishing morals and customs that help or hinder Africa's progress is instructive of African journalists. African journalists will not be dealing with facts per se but how to open African culture to forces of progress not necessarily from outside forces but those emanating from within the African culture itself that have for long been frozen and suppressed by colonialism and African elites. The African journalist (and media houses) does this by not only reporting what is culturally opposing (that's inhibitions within the

of ethnocentrism. As Lewis Vaughn argues beliefs have consequences, and massive belief in supernatural powers in the African scheme of things are as consequential as those in politics, economics, technology, science, and social policy. Beliefs in all these spheres affect the quality of African people's lives. So African journalists, under the African Renaissance process, have the moral obligation to examine the underpinnings of all African cultural assumptions. This is not only useful but also necessary for African society if the African journalist cares about the progress of society, of which his/her calling demands. While most Africans accept journalistic inquiry into programs such as anti-corruption campaigns or HIV/AIDS pandemic, they cry out when an impartial journalist seriously questions certain cultural practices such female genital mutilation. It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the African crises have not been interpreted from its morals and customs. This is not surprising since in Africa, where the ocean of

culture) Africa's progress but also explaining the history of a particular cultural practice that is anti-progressive today. When Liberia imploded, it was incumbent on African journalists to tell the background and implications of cultural practices; for example, the Liberian elites low radius of trust. As a result, a climate of mistrust, suspicion, hatred, and irrationality was created, which snowballed into civil war. Several African countries have similar cultural problems, notably Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have resulted in conflicts.

The African journalist operates as a *comparativist*, under the *New African Journalism*, in a continent where people do not know and understand each other and where they have repeatedly been told that they have no common culture and incompatible. It is the journalist's job to point out the shared similarities and differences of cultural practices in favour of, or opposed to, Africa's modernization. The uncovering of negative cultural practices in one part of Africa is important because it fits certain African patterns and as such, has added significance continentally (Hachten, 1998, p.3). So too, is the touting of positive African virtues such as *ubuntu*. When the Ghanaian media exposed the traditional enslavement of teenage girls by the Ewes in the Volta region, Africans wanted to know about similar cultural practices in other parts of Africa. As the Ewe enslavement revealed, the Ghanaian media's non-discretion created a news process rooted in background and follow-ups. Consequently, the news was followed closely by international human rights organizations. These organizations are working hard with

unquestioned morals and custom washes the landscape, critical questions about traditional practices are taboo, and "way below the radar of most journalists and the citizens they serve." (See appendix three)

local civil society groups, the government, and the media to free the enslaved girls from this cultural slavery.

If African journalists (and media institutions) are to go to the roots of African cultural assumptions and practices that have prevented Africa's modernization, then they have to provide the African people with rational choices. Cultural empowerment and rational choice flow from enlightenment, which in turn comes from communication. The African journalist does this by rediscovering, renewing, and re-flowering the long suppressed African culture through ages of slave trade, colonialism, neglect, weakness, and decay. The *New African Journalism* is expected to perform three broad functions: keep surveillance on the cultural environment, expose cultural threats and opportunities affecting Africa's progress, and correlates the cultural components of African society in making responses to the African cultural environment. In the ensuing exposition of everything in the African culture that oppose Africa's self-mastery, the African journalist helps to transmit the social inheritance to the next generation, helping to lessen unnecessary cultural burden (Lasswell, 1971; Hachten, 1998,p.3).

Demanding cultural accountability²⁰ enables the African journalist to enlighten African leaders, experts, and the rank and file about inhibitions within the culture that hinder

²⁰ By cultural accountability, I mean the subject of the African culture to unsentimentally rigorous accountability, as is whether a political act is correct or responsible in the modern setting. By cultural accountability, the African is responsible for his/her actions and not by the influence of any supernatural powers or witches. By cultural accountability, I mean how certain cultural practices that implicate in Africa's development should be culturally accounted for. In this instance, the African journalist has to investigate, culturally, whether Liberia's explosion into civil war is because of excessive irrational dabbling of President Samuel Doe and his cohorts in *juju/marabou* against rational choices such as human rights, ethnic balance, equity, freedom, fairness, and many more. Or how whether Nigeria's late military junta

development. At the same time, positive values such as *ubuntu* (“I am because We are”) could be teased out to influence policy. Disagreement within a country about a country’s excessive reliance on witchcraft jeopardizes that country’s modernization prospects. The Democratic Republic of the Congo sees its future threatened by reliance on witchcraft.

Civic journalism fits, as the new journalistic ethos within the African Renaissance, thanks to the *New African Journalism* that exposes all that is wrong within African culture. Civic journalism incorporates all journalistic tools and attempts to connect community to its practices by de-emphasizing the elitist nature of media and helps the African journalist get the required connection to the African people. Civic journalism helps the African journalist to understand African culture deeply, and helps to preserve cultural practices, further aiding Africa’s progress.

Civic journalism²¹, despite controversy about its mission, will make the African community conscious of itself. Under civic journalism, African journalists (and media houses) are not neutral on the core values of the community, as the model takes the agenda-setting back to the community. In this atmosphere, the African journalists (and media houses) redefine their role, reframes the African question and “changes the conventions about what is news and how it is reported”. This would be a welcome relief from the old way of reporting that has remained the status quo since Africa’s

head, General Sani Abacha, nearly sent his country into civil war because of his massive reliance on *juju/marabou* mediums to the detriment of rational choices such as democracy and rule of law.

²¹ As Thomas C. Leonard (1999,p.85) explains civic journalism wants the citizenry to be conscious of themselves through their education of the issues, and fired to act on their conclusions. As expected of the African journalist, under the African Renaissance process, the “press cannot be neutral on these core values.” The press care and actively work to “make connections” with citizenry, especially so connections

independence (Leonard, 1999, p.85; MISA, 1999, p.1). The African journalist does this by opening up to the African culture, history and struggles.²²

The African media will be an 'open book' for its citizens. Dialogue with Africans will finally happen. Africans will finally participate in media functioning. Problems the media face in an authoritarian culture will be open for inspection, as Ghanaians and the Ghanaian mass media are doing today under President John Kuffour, and "would evaluate a project partly by the extent to which the media expose themselves to criticism and more generally would look for changes in the ways journalism is conducted" as "means to some more communal end" (Chaffee, p.177).

This communal end will let ordinary Africans' voices flow into stories, becoming essential resources, not just passive consumers or on-lookers. And in a continent teeming with distress, the reconciliation between African values and global journalistic values will enable African journalists (and their institutions) to expose the mud that has stifled Africa's prosperity. Along the way, African journalists can educate Africans about seeking solutions to the layer of trash embedded in their moral-ethical regulations and

with cultural issues obstructing them. Under civic journalism, newspapers become part of citizens' household.

²² The African journalist can do this by joining the new professional ethos of "cross-border" investigative journalism, as advanced by *The Toronto Star* columnist Stephen Handelman (Tuesday, July 3, 2001, p. A17). Moving beyond the traditional investigative reporting, which is focused more along local/national lines, "cross-border" transcends this by getting co-operation between journalists from wide range of countries. The relevance of "cross-border" reporting is that "many subjects are simply impossible to understand today if reported from the perspective of just one country," as the African journalist will confront when dealing seriously with African culture. So he/she will need unprecedented co-operation among other journalists from wide range of countries outside Africa. Here journalists work like INTERPOL, the international police organization, which faces similar challenges with increases in transnational crime network by fostering co-operation among law enforcement authorities. In the African journalism context, the relevance will not be only sharing resources or data bases but comparing African

custom. The African press will not get in the way of African society solving its problems. The press will, instead, empower the African community and help clear the confusion of priorities. The African journalist (and his/her media houses) need use the traditional journalistic tools—who, what, when, where, and why—to ask why exposing lack of self-confidence, trust and progress in the African culture and society is as important to him/her as it is for the African community (Chaffee, p.177; MISA, 1999, p.1; Rosen, 1996, p.7).

Views that permeate African newsrooms are not representative enough of the African community. Freed from its own limitations and the limitations within the African culture, the African journalist explores solutions important to Africans. Values, for example, as how the average Sierra Leonean talks of *na God mark am* (It is God who has decreed everything) and how such rhetoric stifles rational choice, puts limits on reasoning in a fatalistic way, and hence the country's arrested development as seen through its civil war. The African journalists offer the African people an intellectual self-defense against not only authoritarian values and backwardness embedded in African culture, but against irrationality such as tribalism disseminated by colonialism through their divide-and-rule policies (MISA, 1999, p.2).

The African journalist mirrors what Karl Jaspers in his *Man in the Modern Age* is quoted by John Merrill in *Existential Journalism* (1996,p.27) as saying the “journalist...can merge in the tension of the day...He can seek out the innermost region where the soul of

values with other parts of the world without any hint of ethnocentrism but for the good health of African custom and morals.

the age takes a step forward. He deliberately interweaves his destiny with that of the epoch. He takes alarm, he suffers, and he balks when he encounters Nothingness. He becomes insincere when he is content with what brings satisfaction to the majority. He soars towards the height when he sincerely fulfills his being in the present.”

It is when African journalists have bath in the African tension of the day and retool themselves and their institutions in African culture and history at the conceptual level (that’s individual African journalists) and their *realpolitique* (that’s their media institutions) will they be able to be born again under the umbrella of the *New African Journalism* for an Afric-centric paradigm.

POLICY PRESCRIPTION

Four policy prescriptions are offered in the *New African Journalism* as the communication ethos of the African Renaissance process. These are: (1) Education of African journalists in African history and culture, (2) shifting paradigm from Eurocentric to Afric-centric in journalism/mass communication models, (3) the African Renaissance Institute in Botswana and Pretoria should organize seminars and colloquiums for journalists, (4) and *New African Journalism* style book. The policy prescription here is targeted at both African journalists (some of whom may be freelancers as many who string for foreign mass media ventures are) and the African mass media institutions such as the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). These four prescriptions are discussed in detail below.

(1) Education of African journalists in African culture and history

As was noted in chapter three, the key component of the African Renaissance process is the rebirth of Africa's culture. The revival of the African culture opens it, simultaneously, to public discussion and scrutiny. But with the African elite (here educated class, including the journalist, and "Big Men") fearful of discussing their culture for varied reasons, including ethnocentrism, definitional problems, and reasons bordering on identity and ego, the African journalist, by his/her professional principles, is well placed to lead in the discussion and scrutiny of the African culture. But before the African journalists can do this, as I pointed out in chapter four, they have to be aware that their education is not grounded in African values (This includes the re-training of African journalism/mass communication teachers in order to accomplish this task, since currently they have not been trained in African culture). For this reason, African culture has not been critically discussed and revealed in relation to Africa's progress. To address this problem, journalism schools located in Africa and media houses should teach journalists African history and culture. Armed with their new education, African journalists will be in better place to understand the African morals and customs. Having understood the African morals and customs, the African journalists will be in better position to serve their continent. Still, their long-running colonial mindset will be replaced by African values mindset, making them appreciate the good value buried in the African and simultaneously understand the negative ones hampering Africa's progress.

With formal education in African culture and history, in addition to their normal traditional journalism training, the African journalist should be able to interpret African events by explaining the cultural and historical background of a particular story. The

African journalist's formal education in African history and culture will position him/her to be a **comparativist**, pointing out similarities and differences in African events in a way that is conducive to development. In this process, the African journalist will help in the integration of the African peoples, raising intra-and inter-African consciousness and fostering their commonality.

(2) Shifting paradigm from Eurocentric to Afric-centric journalism/communication models

On a broader level, journalism, as the gathering, the processing and delivery of information and development of newspapers, magazines or broadcast media, is entangled with communication. That is the persuasion, communication processes and effects, audience studies, information interpretation, and interpersonal communication in the African context lacks African cultural values. As a result, this process has made African social events portrayed wrongly because of the way modern communication came to Africa. In this instance,

... ways need to be found for African media to produce their own programs, more in keeping with the local situation and cultural identity and better able to respond to genuine needs and deep-felt aspirations of the continent's citizens. This means that foreign programs should continue to have their full place alongside endogenous programs, but no more than their place. Here, too, it means striking the right balance ("Workshop on the Role of the Media in Africa's Transition," December, 1-2, 1999, www.gca.org, p.10. accessed: 2000/10/17)

Here the African culture, in the eyes and ears of the African journalists, becomes a national interest issue just as the African economy, politics, health, environment, and security are.

(3) The African Renaissance Institute seminars for journalists

Pretoria, South Africa and Gaborone, Botswana are the two places in Africa where the African Renaissance Institute, ARI, offices are located. The African Renaissance Institute, a think tank behind the African Renaissance process according to its Executive Summary, “is born out of a firm and irrevocable commitment by its founders towards engendering the *Renaissance of Africa*” (p.8). ARI is non-partisan to any political thought, systems or movement, beyond supporting the processes that are necessary to unlock Africa’s creative and resource potential embedded in its culture.

As an activist-oriented organization, ARI is committed to assisting Africa’s development through “working with governments, other African Development Institutions, and the Private Sector.” It seeks to achieve problem-solving research in priority areas such as human resources and infrastructure and communication development. It also builds user-friendly and supportive databases containing significant findings of research on Africa’s development endeavours. The ARI provides *independent* counsel on reforms and problem-solving development strategies, closely monitors individual African national economies and provides advance warnings to African governments of impending serious developments in their economies. The ARI does this by rolling out its pool of advisers who can be called upon to provide objective diagnosis that currently exist or those that may develop. To fight for the eradication of then false impression that “Africa has no

problems” or that “all problems that exist are solely due to an externally-induced or historical phenomena.”

The ARI intends to develop an attitude of mind that is commensurate with the challenge engendering Africa's self-reliant development and to work towards “not feeling sorry for ourselves” and to deal with the real issues of backwardness that shall not vanish away through wishful thinking, excessive blaming of outsiders of Africa's problems.

With such immense research and activities, the African Renaissance Institute should organize periodic workshops, seminars, colloquiums, and conferences as educational package for African journalists and other communication practitioners on the African Renaissance process. By this function, the ARI will be helping to raise the consciousness African journalists. The ARI has to design mass communication plans and strategies for African media houses.

Aside from workshops, seminars, colloquiums, and conferences taking place in Pretoria and Gaborone, the ARI should co-operate with regional media organizations, individual national journalists/media associations such as the Windhoek, Namibia based Media Institute of Southern Africa, MISA, to help inculcate the African Renaissance process in their journalistic practices.

In the same vein, and in line with its activist orientation, the ARI should send its pool of human resources, that is its advisors, to various African newspaper houses as instructors

on-site to help integrate the African Renaissance process into their editorial practices. (Or the editors to undertake targeted courses at the ARI). The ARI can also undertake similar venture on regional bases. This will enable the ARI pool of advisors to understand the media's problems.

(4) New African Journalism style book and manuals

It was pointed out in chapter four that the need to shift paradigm from Eurocentric to Afric-centric is explained by the fact that media models operating in Africa are not rooted adequately in African values but that of the Western world. The *New African Journalism*, as the outcome of this experience and is grounded in the African Renaissance process.

Through the assistance of organizations such as the African Renaissance Institute, the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency, a *New African Journalism* stylebook and series of manuals could be issued. The assistance of World Bank is stressed because the international institutions such as the World Bank, after years of imposing policies that weren't informed by African culture and history, are now gradually changing, incorporating African history and culture in its policies. More so, recently, the World Bank sponsored a seminar on how to investigate corruption in Nigeria for senior level journalists. This was done without any hint of ethnocentrism but for the progress of Nigeria grounded in Nigeria's history and culture in relation to the international system. The assistance in helping in designing the manuals will be in the same fashion. The proposed manuals will be practical guide of instructions for use by African journalists on how to critically facilitate the African Renaissance process, especially how to critically scrutinize the African culture. The unwritten hope here is to

help African journalists not look out of line with their own continent's revive indigenous culture which forces of morals and customs have not influenced policy planning. The manual will aim at unnerving difficult problems for African journalists.

The ARI manuals will demand, among others, that African journalists understand an astonishing array of African cultural forces (both positive and negative) and be able to explain them with relative clarity and simplicity to the African society in their operations. In this way, the manuals will help the African journalist to become troubleshooters of the culture, by providing fresh, friendly perspectives of the African culture and the whole renaissance process.

The manuals can deal with topics such as: "African Tradition, Media Law and Ethics," "How to factor in the African Renaissance process in Editorial Decisions," "African Culture as National Interest," and "How to Report Various African Issues in Comparativist Way so as to Facilitate the African Renaissance process." Well-prepared and lively, these ARI manuals will be a valuable complement to ARI organized workshops, seminars, and conferences for African journalists and other media practitioners.

On the other hand, the prescribed stylebook of the *New African Journalism*, like other journalism in-house stylebooks, will be rooted in African history and culture. African journalists will write to African readers in a language attuned to their lives, everyday experience, their history, shared values and thoughts, and struggles. The unity of the

African culture among its 2,000 ethnic sub-groups, for example, could be highlighted in the process of writing reports, commentaries, essays, and interpretations.

How should African journalists, under the African Renaissance process, enliven their style so as to professionally facilitate the African Renaissance process? As the Rwandan genocide in which over 500,000 people died experience reveal (partly due to the role of the Rwandan mass media in the killings), how can they use words that will foster peace and harmony, instead of hatred? How will they use words in comparative way that will bring mutual understanding and experience among Africans? How are they to use words that will move Africans into integration? How are they to use words that will reconcile African values with the colonial legacies and the global system, without any hint of ethnocentrism?

For example, African journalists, aside from the normal stylebooks either from Associated Press or their in-house ones, could ask themselves some questions like these in relation to the renaissance:

- (1) Have I used words that exposed, say, the killing of twins by some African ethnic groups because the twins are believed to be evil without being ethnocentric? Let's look at this:

The tyokosi tradition of the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana, Togo, and Benin Republic where teenage girls are enslaved to shrines for sins committed by the parents is primitive.

This sentence didn't quite make it, in the spirit of the African Renaissance. It should be like this:

The tyokosi tradition of the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana, Togo, and Benin Republic violates the rights of the teenage girls enslaved to shrines for sins committed by their parents.

The difference between the above two sentences is: the first one has ethnocentric bias, while the second one has not and is framed in the global value of human rights, fairness, dignity, justice, freedom, and rule of law. Also, in the two sentences there is an attempt to compare Ghana, Togo, and Benin Republic as some of the main places in Africa where the tyokosi is practiced. This new genre will bring understanding among Africans, informed by their common experiences.

- (2) African journalists have to put words as succinctly as possible reflecting the African Renaissance? This sentence below may well reveal so:

The Sierra Leone civil war is caused by external factors.

Upon second thought, it becomes clear that the words are not rooted in the African Renaissance. This is what we need:

Despite external factors, internal factors like low radius of trust within the culture have more to do with the causes of the Sierra Leone civil war.

- (3) African journalists have to correct the erroneous notion spread over decades by the colonialists that Africans are “primitive.”

Look at this:

Greenpeace is working very hard to alert the world about the increasing destruction of the planet by unrestrained science.

If seen from African culture, Greenpeace activities reinforce the African value of the balance between the physical and the metaphysical, which aims to protect the environment. This is how the African journalist can report global environmental stories:

The activities of Greenpeace to protect the environment reveal that Africans are not primitive after all. African culture strikes a balance between the physical and the metaphysical, which seeks to protect the environment.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

This chapter rounds up arguments offered in the previous chapters. What are the new challenges facing the African journalist under the African renaissance process? What are the lessons to be learned by the African journalist in relation to the African culture and Africa's progress? An attempt is made to answer these questions by tying together the main arguments in the previous chapters. In addition, four prescriptions that African journalists have to take into consideration in tackling the new cultural challenges facing Africa in its march towards modernization in the global context are laid out.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

We have seen in chapter one that, for long the concept of culture has not been discussed when talking about progress. Not only was this the case in academia, but also the African media have not been considering culture relation to Africa's progress. Either because of colonialism or for ethnocentric reasons, a fuller discussion of the African culture in relation to progress has been virtually no-go area. But as culture increasingly matters in the progress scheme of a people, issues such as social capital that reveals the shared norms and trust of a society, and other cultural measurements of progress, are coming to the open globally. I used the term African culture to denote one-shared values of the African ethnic groups in a diverse multilingual continent. But opened by the African Renaissance process, African culture is increasingly being discussed by Africans in relation to the crises facing them. Some are even calling for peaceful cultural revolution through education, politics, economics, and social life. Some, too, call for reconciliation of African values and global ones, while some call for modifications of African culture to

suit modern times. Yet still others call for radical cultural revolution targeting all noted negative cultural inhibitions such as *juju*.

Chapter three showed what sparked the African Renaissance process: persistence and destructiveness of Africa's economic and political crises that have stricken Africa make it necessary for Africans to act through a renaissance process. The chapter attempted to look at the various African, and in some cases, non-African, discussions of the African Renaissance process. While some recall Africa's glorious past and what led to Africa's crises, others doubt any grounds for a renaissance. The African Renaissance process is influenced by external factors like colonialism, unfavourable terms of trade and Africa's marginalization in the global economic system and internal factors like predatory elite, negative cultural practices and Africa's inability to use its culture for progress. The negative/positive cultural practices were highlighted more in the chapter, which is the central aim of this thesis, simply because the other influences such as unfair terms of trade are known but that of the negative/positive cultural practices less so, as *expotimes.net* editor Ibrahim Seaga Shaw explained in chapter four. The chapter noted that the African Renaissance process is, first, the rebirth of the African culture in a continent where its elite is described as confused. And, second, the revived African culture's reconciliation with the global values such as human rights, democracy, accountability, rule of law, freedom, justice, and science/technology. In this sense, as the chapter on African culture revealed, Africa's blind submission to the supernatural which explains the low social capital and the small "radius of trust," is mirrored in a global arena that is driven by rationality. Simultaneously, African values like communalism are

brought against the fast intrusion of methodological individualism driven by globalization. The key issue of the African Renaissance is the opening up of the African culture for forces of progress to work.

In chapter four, I explored how the African journalist can critically facilitate the African Renaissance process not by blind acquiescence to regimes but guided by “national interest.” I looked at the history of African journalism and demonstrated that because the colonialists brought journalism in the modern sense to Africa, local African culture and interest were overlooked. African elites who campaigned vigorously for independence from the colonialists, and most of who were journalists, continued with the same colonial media policies. As a result, African values did not dictate media policies and national development, as have the case in Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. The call for shift in model from Eurocentric to Afric-centric is revealed by the fact that Africa’s crises call for an “African solution for African problems,” as Ghana’s George Ayitteh proclaims. And that it is through this that the heart of the morals and customs of Africa can be investigated under the gaze of progress not necessarily in Western sense but for the African to live better, freed from false and vain beliefs.

Operating within the opened African culture and global system mean the African journalist need to understand African culture, especially how some aspects have been opposing Africa’s mastery of its future and its progress. Already, in places like Tanzania, where Marxist journalism model had been mixed with liberal models, the country is changing through looking at the inhibitions within its culture in relation to its

development. But influential newspapers like the London, U.K based *New African* while grounding its new editorial policies on African history and culture is still caught in the ethnocentric fever finding it hard to discuss the African culture critically and countering any discussion of the African culture it finds negative. On the other hand, the on-line newspaper, *expotimes.net*, has been openly discussing Africa's culture critically in relation to its progress.

To go to the heart of African culture to find elements opposing Africa's mastery of its future, and, therefore, its prosperity, the African journalist employs public journalism. This will enable the African journalist to connect to the African community so as to know and understand the layers of dirt in the culture that have been preventing African societies from moving into modernization. This is the foundation of the *New African Journalism*—a new model for the African journalist under the African renaissance process. Under the *New African Journalism*, the African journalist can lead revolution of the African mind through the modification of African values to suit modern times. The reason is African journalists (and media institutions) have the key communication tools such as radio, television, newspapers, and the Internet effect change unlike other elites. This will happen when the African journalist frees himself or herself from ethnocentrism of the past. All this demands cultivation of principles of professionalism rooted in African values in order not to undermine the entire African culture.

LESSONS LEARNED

Three main lessons came out of this exploration of the African media within the ethos of the African renaissance. The core lesson is that the African crises is as culturally responsible as are other factors such as unfair terms of trade, Africa's marginalization in the global economic system, and the hangover from the slave trade and colonialism. This chequered historical past and unfavourable global economic system impacting on Africa has been worsened by inhibitions within the African culture itself. This situation has been prolonged since independence because of lack of open, fuller discussion of the African culture in relation to progress. But as the African crises deepen and most of the international organizations like the World Bank that have traditionally been funding and advising Africa are ineffective, the African culture is increasingly coming under the searchlight of modernization. A culture where supernatural forces dominate cannot be a culture of rigour and work. So the best card for Africa's renewal is for it to go into the heart of its culture.

The next lesson is that the African Renaissance process reveals the lack of African cultural and historical input in Africa's development since the 1950s to now. That Africa is at the crossroads reveals its polluted culture's inability to encourage development. This is explained by the fact that Africa has had glorious past in scientific and technological discoveries in the ancient world that attracted people from ancient Europe and the Middle East. But in the past 500 years Africa has slowed down considerably due to colonialism and slave trade leading to its current crises. The African Renaissance process recognizes both the internal and external reasons for Africa's crises. The African Renaissance asks

Africans, however, to look inward first to understand the crises. Some doubt a renaissance of Africa in the face of persistent and destructive of economic and political crises. Others think actual renaissance will come from culturally dictated institutional reforms such as de-colonization of the African education system, the emancipation of African women as property of African men, and the exposing of morals and customs inimical to Africa's progress.

A final lesson is that with predatory African elites (including African journalists) and the intellectuals (held low in esteem in the eyes of Africans because of their attitude), African journalists (retooled via African culture and history), become the key communication facilitators of the African Renaissance process. But before the journalists can do this, they have to shift models from Eurocentric to Afric-centric in order to ground developments in African culture and history. This will enable them to ground their model or philosophies in African culture and history, and free their minds from the long-running mental slavery. It will also enable African journalists to help Africans go to the heart of their culture that have been hindering them from moving into modernization. Since it seeks to connect with the community and minimize elitism and open up its practices to the public in a democratic setting, civic or public journalism rooted in the African culture and history, is the key to effective journalism ethos within the African Renaissance process. Any other model revolves around it. This is the *New African Journalism* model.

PROSPECTS

The prospects for the ethos of the African journalist in the African Renaissance process are rooted in three main visions. These are the booms in new technology, growth in the works of African cultural studies, and prospects of the African Renaissance.

1) New Technology

The new media such as the computers and Internet, lubricated by the fast developing international communication networks, have the power to help the African journalist handle thoroughly the relationship between culture and progress. One of lights of new media is that most of the inhibitions emanating from the African culture and much-suppressed positive ones can no longer be swept under the carpet, as cultures 'enlighten' each other. The current traditional media problems of inadequate funds, inadequate training, economic strangulations by African governments, censorship, media tribalism, dominant Eurocentric values, and so on may slow down the African journalist's drive to look deeply into the culture for development. But the new media has the ability to transcend the African space and time, lessening potential censorship, despite dearth of modern technologies to majority of African journalists and the high cost of telephone connections (www.gca-cma.org/emd99.htm). Information technology will make it possible for the African journalist to discuss controversial issues such as the implications of culture and progress online without any limit being put on his/her work by authoritarian African regimes unlike other media outlets such as the print media. (The belief is that with time the new media will expand in Africa, as we are seeing now). Why? Unlike other traditional media which are may be costly, the information

technology's financial barriers to entry are low, especially on the World Wide Web, and regulatory hurdles are almost nil.

A typical case of the new media as a prospect to help the African journalist to broaden his/her work and weakening pressures from African governments, especially in the area of discussing the impact of culture on progress is the www.expotimes.net.

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, the publisher/editor of *Expo Times*, fled his native Sierra Leone in 1998 for political persecution after members of his staff some of whom were thrown into prison, one of whom died under suspicious circumstances, for their critical reports. (Ten Sierra Leonean journalists were killed in 1999 in the line of duty, the largest number of journalist killed in the world among other nations of the world). Others fled to far away places like Vancouver (Canada), London (United Kingdom), Conakry (Guinea), Banjul (the Gambia), and Accra (Ghana). Shaw settled in Paris, France and quickly made contacts with such journalistic organizations as *Reporters sans Frontieres*. While conversing with other journalists in Paris, with hindsight, it occurred to Shaw to revive the *Expo Times*. In March 15, 2000 Shaw launched the [expotimes.net](http://www.expotimes.net), Sierra Leone's and Africa's first sole online newspaper, with initial assistance from the London, U.K based Guardian Foundation, Paris, France based *Reporters sans Frontieres*, and the London, U.K based Freedom Forum European Centre.

The [expotimes.net](http://www.expotimes.net) has not only continued with its mission of "exposing today for tomorrow" but broaden its editorial stance to include discussing the Africa culture and its

implication in development. Gradually many Africans are warming up to this. According to Shaw, in an interview with me, "People are fascinated by the implication of African culture and its impact on development. We know it is a controversial area but just as some political issues are controversial so is the culture. The African has not pondered on his/her culture and progress...We are leading him/her to do. I have received calls and e-mails from around the indicating the importance of this cultural column." The culture-progress column has been running since May, 2000, covering vexing issues of culture and progress. Today, *expotimes.net* reached much wider audience with baseline of 6,000 "hits," and increase from 3,000 a year ago, and being among the 80 African newspapers featured on the main African global server, www.allafrica.com.

The new technology, more the online newspapers, will help the Africa journalist lessen any potential pressure of censorship and raise more easily cultural and progress issues such as the implications of, say, the average Ghanaian spending 50 cents of every one dollar on ostentatious funeral ceremonies to the detriment of saving and investment. However, the use of the new technology will demand higher professional standards, responsibilities, and auto-censure by the African journalist.

2) Boom in African Culture and History

Increasingly, works on African culture and history, the ground upon which the African journalist is to walk under the banner of the *New African Journalism* model, are on the prowl. These are coming in the form of publications, media discussions, seminars, conferences, and policies of international organizations such as the World Bank and the

International Monetary Fund. Groundbreaking newly released cultural and historical publications such as *Tradition and Change in Africa: The Essays of J.F. Ade Ajayi* edited by Toyin Falola (2000) and *Sacred Spaces and Public Quarrel: African Cultural and Economic Landscape* edited by Ezekiel Kalipeni and Paul T. Zeleza (2000) demonstrate the boom in African history and culture and its impact on the African journalist. African magazines such the famous London, U.K based *West Africa* magazine since 25 May-31 May, 2001 issue has began a series entitled *Africa's Glorious Past* to educate Africans about their history and culture based and how this has implications in their existence, especially as they search for dignity and self-esteem to direct them in their negotiation of the crises confronting them. The column was as a result of advise from me as an editorial consultant and contributing editor. The respected Washington D.C., USA based *allafrica.com*, the main global Africa internet server, which handles over 80 African newspapers, both on-line and print, audio, and magazines, and publishes over 500 stories daily, is now featuring and expanding African culture and history.

On a more grand scale, the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC, commissioned top African historians and cultural experts to write about African history from African perspectives. The result is series entitled, *The Story of Africa*, which can be got in both audio and read on the Internet. It tells the history of Africa from Africans themselves unlike earlier when Europeans wrote African history.²³ This offers hope for more open and transparent discussion of the relationship of African culture and progress in a non-sentimental, non-ethnocentric fashion. For instance, on May 17, 2001 the World Bank's

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) for Development Program organized a seminar on learning from local communities in Africa. The aim was to learn from African healers and farmers to influence the World Bank's African policy makers. It is important to note that the seminar involved key African governments and non-government organizations such as the Tanzania's AIDS Working Group and Kenya's Center for Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Agriculture By-Products, CIKSAP. They presented their approaches to healthcare based on indigenous knowledge. "We need to learn from the local communities to enrich the development process," said James D. Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank.

The African journalist can take off from such volume of talks and publications coming from within Africa itself and outside to probe which aspects of African culture is desirable in development and which need to be eradicated or refined, for cultural beliefs have consequences. In this way, the African journalist sparks serious critical questioning of what affects virtually everything that matters and glaringly vital to progress. By this, the African journalist will be able to beam his professional light upon cultural issues that are supposed to expose both the hidden, unquestioned negative and constructive elements within so they can be weighed, debated, and directed. As publications and talks of African culture and history increases the bites from its ensuing realities will impinge on unquestioned influences that have stifled Africa's modernization. From here, the African journalist will be able weigh them and provoke debates in the modernization game such as the *expotimes.net's Voodoo Rule in Africa* series. Nowhere will this be more telling

²³ For the first time, top African historians look at African events and characters that have shaped the continent from the origin of humankind to the end of South African apartheid with African eyes

than the massive dominance of supernatural powers, the grand gravitational force impinging on the African's mind and morals. Boom in African culture and history publications and talks, taken up by the African journalist, as he/she weigh and debate them, provoking criticisms continent-wide, and its ensuing informed disagreements, will all be necessary to Africa's cultural progress.

3) The African Renaissance Process

Refracted more by its increasing internal contradictions, which have been fuelled by its culture and the unfavourable global economy, the only card for Africa to play in its today's existential game is the African Renaissance process. This is the future of Africa. A future in which African themselves, educated and uplifted by their newly liberated journalists through the *New African Journalism* (which will enable them to critically question their culture) will be able to revive their long-suppressed culture and reconcile it with the enabling aspects of the global system. Still, opened by the international communication network, Africans will be able to see both forces of progress and forces of retrogression better within their culture. This will enable Africans see the values within their culture that spurred their pre-Atlantic slave trade and pre-colonial achievements—universities, astronomy, feats in agriculture, medicine, alcohol-free society, and many more. Simultaneously, the refraction of this era will enable African see the degree of pollutions that have accumulated within their culture. Inspiration from these two views will lubricate the African Renaissance process. The first prospect for the African Renaissance will come from these sensibilities.

The second prospect of the African Renaissance will come from Africa as part of the global system, as part of the human race, drawn from the fact that Africa is the cradle of the human race. For this reason, what is good for the world is good for Africa, and vice versa. For this reason, Africa, in the global diffusion and infusion of cultures, takes from other cultures to refine that emanating from within its culture that is inhibiting its progress. And simultaneously use the global culture to enhance the enabling aspects of its culture. What is relevant here are that the enabling elements in the global culture such as accountability, democracy, rule of law, equity, freedom, justice, human rights, and dignity are as African as it is global. These elements have always been present in pre-Atlantic and slave trade and pre-colonial Africa. With disruption through colonialism and immersion in the capitalist system, the original African values were destroyed. Africa now is forced to copy these elements as they apply in the West. Africa is not where it was, and it is not where it is supposed to be. So long as it keeps trying to copy the West, trying to catch up, Africa cannot change its present situation. Africa, therefore, influences the global system as the global system influences Africa, no more, no less. This will increasingly lubricate the African Renaissance process in its education reforms, economic reconstruction, technology and science, and social revolution.

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APPENDIX ONE

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED IBRAHIM SEAGA SHAW, EDITOR OF THE ONLINE NEWSPAPER, EXPOTIMES.NET

1. Why have your online newspaper been deeply involved in the African Renaissance process?

ANSWER: We do this by the simple conviction that only a renaissance will free Africa from its deathbed. For this reason, we are using our medium to promote the African Renaissance process. We do this not only from our writers but also by sometimes culling from other publications' reports, commentaries, and essays on the African Renaissance process. Our opening up of our pages to the discussion of African culture is one such example.

2. How is your online newspaper convinced it has a role to play in the African Renaissance process?

ANSWER: We are moved by empathy and by the fact that a better Africa is good for everybody, whether one is a journalist or a nurse. Africa has tried various ideologies since independence but has not worked. So now is the time to go within ourselves for solutions to our terrible situation—diseases, poverty, hatred, corruption, and so on. Convinced of this situation, we are moving into how, for better or worse, the African culture should come first in our search for solutions to our development.

3. You are moving beyond the normal reporting of the African culture—that's its arts and aesthetics--to critical discussion of its inner health. What informed such position?

ANSWER: If African culture is to be revived and appropriated for development then the culture should be examined fully. If African communalism and *ubuntu* are good then how are disturbed by belief in witchcraft and the PHD, pull him down, syndrome? We discuss fully the implications of all these in order to help future policymaking.

4. The new media has helped you a lot in escaping censorship, especially in discussing openly the African Renaissance process and some of the positive and negative aspects of the African culture. Can you explain this in the context of how the new media can be used simultaneously in Africa's renaissance and cultural empowerment?

ANSWER: Censorship is aplenty in Africa's media and as the media take on serious cultural discussion African traditionalists are bound to cry out. Others will cry of ethnocentrism. So censorship will be mounted against the African media. The new media such as the Internet allows me to escape such threats or impositions, but I have to be responsible in handling cultural issues as I do with other issues such as economics, politics, and social policy. With the new media African governments will

find it difficult to censor the press and there are more room for discussion of the African culture. The success of our *Voodoo Rule in Africa* column attests to this.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED STUART ADAM, VICE PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC), CARLETON UNIVERSITY

1. How can journalists be educators without compromising their basic principles?

ANSWER: One of the basic functions of journalism itself is education, and it comes in the form of criticism, editorializing, or conferral of judgment and narrating. The educational function of journalism comes in these functions.

2. What prescription(s) would you offer African journalists in handling controversial issues emanating from the African culture?

ANSWER: They have to be more reformists in relation to the problems they want to tackle. This will come from the structure and culture they operate in since they are influenced by the cultural environment.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED DANIEL TETTEH OSABU-KLE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, CARLETON UNIVERSITY

1. You have traveled a lot in Africa as former director of Civil Aviation and briefly as Minister in Ghana. How do you assess the commonality of African culture in your African travels?

ANSWER: The African culture is common. When I traveled to southern African state of Swaziland I found that the puberty rites there were the same as those of the 56 ethnic groups in my native Ghana in West Africa.

2. What is your position about the African Renaissance process?

ANSWER: The African Renaissance will not take place in a vacuum but in certain structures established by the white man since colonial days. The colonial structures have remained precisely because independence did not mean decolonization that is the breaking down of the colonial economic, political and ideological structures. Replacement with structures oriented principally to African nationalist aspirations has not happened. Modifications to the indigenous African culture to meet today's African situation must occur. So far that has not happened. The new wine of the African Renaissance has to be put in new wine bottles. But at present only the old wine bottles are available. The implication is that there is a great danger that the old bottle will itself pollute the African Renaissance. If there is going to be any genuine African Renaissance it has to be preceded by a revolution that break down the old colonial structures and established the new.

3. You argued in your book *Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa* (2000) that indigenous African values such as those of the Asante, Gad and Yoruba can be appropriated for stable political order and development in Africa. How should Africans in such places as those in the collapsed state of Sierra Leone go about this?

ANSWER: In each of the African ethnic group there is a symbol for unity. These symbols have to be transferred to the national level, just as ideological symbols were transferred in the case of Britain from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland to constitute the Union Jack. The formation of African ethnic groups had come about by clans transferring their ideological symbols of unity from the clan level to the ethnic center to constitute that particular ethnic group. The Asante ethnic group of Ghana had come about through this process by bringing disparaging clans to form the powerful Asante kingdom. That same process can be used to transfer ideological symbols of unity from the ethnic level to the national level to constitute a strong nation. The process can transfer the ideological symbols of unity from the national level to constitute the United States of Africa. This is possible because the process of doing that is already there and it has been done before as exemplified by the five clans that came together to form the Asante nation.

4. Do you attribute the pollutions emanating from within the African culture to Africans themselves or from the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism?

ANSWER: While Africans themselves are to be blamed, the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism contributed more to the pollution of the African culture. The colonialists imposed their values on Africa for over 300 years and this suppressed many an African value. Before the slave trade and colonialism Africans were gradually developing their values. Look at ancient African kingdoms and remarkable progress in architecture, metallurgy, agriculture, medicine, human relationship, and many more. If values are anything to go, then it is Africans own values, and not any foreigners, that spur such achievements. The challenge now is to go back and retrieve most of these indigenous African values for our development.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED KOFI SINTIM, PRESIDENT OF THE MONTREAL-BASED *PREMEX COURIER INC.*

1. You were born in Ghana into a business family. You have been in Canada for 20 years both for schooling and later as a businessman, and having one of the most successful business ventures among African-Canadians. How do compare the business culture between Ghana and Canada?

ANSWER: The African has the same business capacity like any other but they have to modernize some of these talents. The art of punctuality, among others, has to be refined. Ostentation and arrogance is serious problem in Africa. The African ego has to be balanced for development. The "Big Man" has to respect his workers and involve them in business. To control the problem of ostentation, the African business

man/woman has to think big and live small, the reverse is the case today. We have to change that.

2. Why are the banks here mistrustful of African-Canadian business men/women?

ANSWER: They think we are not disciplined enough and this is the sources of mistrust. On a deeper level we have look at the Africans culture and those of the other ethnic groups in Canada

3. How do you explain the implications of the African cultural virtue of *ubuntu* and the syndrome of *Pull Him Down*, PHD, in business?

ANSWER: *Ubuntu* ("I am because We are") can be used to create "radius of trust" and thus minimize the level of mistrust among Africans, especially in business. The culture of PHD, pull him down, is counterproductive in business. The man/woman who pulls one down also pulls himself/herself down; the person involved in PHD wastes energy that should have been used to develop. As I said earlier, where *ubuntu* prevails PHD will be eradicated.

4. How can African culture be used to increase business, savings, and investment?

ANSWER: It is simple. Kill PHD and promote *ubuntu*. When this happens ostentatious lifestyle will be minimized and money channeled into savings and, therefore, investment. Short of this saving and investment become low as more money is channeled into ostentatious living. The African has to live small and think big. Jus look at the nature cars in African potholed streets and compare them to those in Canada. Canada has far better roads and richer than African states but people live simply, you don't see too many expensive cars in Canada. On the other hand, you see expensive cars on economically poor country such as Ghanaian with its potholed roads. This is culture.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED NGUNGI WA THION'GO, PROFESSOR OF LANGUAGES AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

1. How can the African Renaissance be achieved?

ANSWER: It will come by rooting everything in the base of Africa. That's the culture. This means decolonizing the African mind and African scholars such as writers writing in African vernacular. I write now in my local Kikuyu language, others should follow it.

2. What obstacles should Africa expect from the renaissance process?

ANSWER: The obstacle is how to decolonized the African mind from mental slavery induced by colonialism and the centuries of damages done to the African base, that's its culture. This means the elites have to be re-educated to see the importance of the African base.

SAMPLE OF QUESTION ASKED DAN OTCHERE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

1. Do you see any elements in the African culture that are crippling its economic growth and development?

ANSWER: Most of Africa's cultural troubles are grounded in the existence of the extended family system. The African family creates a network of obligations that go beyond the Western concept of the nuclear family to include grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and in-laws. The extended family system has social benefits, but, in terms of economic growth, leads to the disturbing dependence on a single breadwinner supporting many relative. The breadwinner is drained of his savings potential capital that could have gone into the banking system to generate economic growth. Consequently, financial support goes into consumption creating a dearth of investment in Africa. As a result of the extended-family system, the tax base of the society becomes smaller. This puts a burden on governments, causing deficits, inflation and currency devaluation. While some aspects of the African culture have its positive values, the negative aspects outweigh the positive. There is always net effect, and that is what I am interested in. African societies are in "dual phase" of extended family and nuclear family values. The dual phase is reflected by the co-existence of two economies in Africa—modern and traditional—and evolution will come through education, globalization, and the reconciliation with other cultures.

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS ASKED WOLE SOYINKA, A NOBEL LAUREATE

1. African elites have bad name in relation to Africa's development, how can they engineer an African Renaissance?

ANSWER: There have been some bad elites in Africa in relation to its development, but some too have paid huge price for acting as conscience of their societies. Time will force African elites who possess vision to come together in supporting the African Renaissance.

2. What path (s) should be taken for the realization of an African Renaissance?

ANSWER: Vision and reality will encourage African leaders to bond together for the African Renaissance. The Organization of African Unity, O.A.U., does not meet Africa's reality...It sat down while brutalities, coup d'etat, genocide, etc happen...Look at Cote d'Ivoire coup...For the African Renaissance to work we have to take the progressives in Southern Africa Development Co-operation and others in West Africa for the African Renaissance vision...Pan African solutions in Africa means we have to concentrate more in the African space than the diaspora...Can't see any vision even of Thabo Mbeki...Nelson Mandela should go beyond localized associations to the continental level but will need help from the rest of the continent.

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS ASKED JOY KWESIGA, DEAN OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, KAMPALA, UGANDA

1. How do you place African women, marginalized by both their culture and the state structure, in the realization of the African Renaissance?

ANSWER: Africa need to look at the traditional role of women, long suppressed and marginalized, for the African Renaissance process to be effective. The gender gap must disappear. We need more education, including encouraging women in science and technology. Africa can learn from South Africa, which has allocated a portion of its budget for women. There should be some elements of the African Renaissance formulae to strengthen women and equality; though already African women are in the African Renaissance programme, they need strengthening, more involvement, short of this there wont be any renaissance. It is from here that the long-running oppression and suppression of African women, who form the bulk of its population, be empowered to facilitate a renaissance.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED PITIKA NTULI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNIVERSAL CREATIVE ARTS, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA AND SENIOR FELLOW AT THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE INSTITUTE

1. What are some of the virtues in the African culture that need to be unearthed for policy making?

ANSWER: There is the need for an African Renaissance because colonialism systematically alienated Africa from its value systems, and, in the process, impoverished Africa culturally, economically and educationally. The damages were so much that an *ubuntu* is the key value to right the imbalances. *Ubuntu* means, "I am because We are." (Please, refer to text of my speech for more detail explanation).

2. How can Africans reconcile the *ubuntu* principle you enthused with the Eurocentric structures dominant in Africa today?

ANSWER: By being able to see the good part of their culture, especially the *ubuntu* principle, in relation to the Eurocentric structures prevailing today, which does not fit the African environment properly.

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS ASKED IFEANYI EZEONU, A PHD SOCIOLOGY CANDIDATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

1. Can there be prospects for an African Renaissance in the current international trade climate where Africa is marginalized and weak?

ANSWER: I am a bit pessimistic about an African Renaissance succeeding in the current international trade climate. How can African revive itself when international trade agreements such as the Uruguay Round subvert African governments and their

states? International trade agreements ignore basic issues affecting Africa: worsening terms of trade, deteriorating balance of payments, lingering debt, right to development and subsequent ignorance by the Uruguay Round legacies and hegemony of the industrialized countries over sub-Sahara Africa. The West control Africa's nascent economies and the welfare of its peoples. For this reason, the prospects for an African Renaissance can never be realized if the West's protectionism makes it difficult for Africa to penetrate necessary markets.

2. What internal strengths does Africa have to use in international trade agreements for the realization of the African Renaissance process?

ANSWER: The strengths lies in Africa's collective unity as one voice in talking trade with the rest of the world. Also Africa's economies have to be strengthened to world standard. But with all these, the West's pushing of economic pills to Africa is uninformed by Africa's history and culture. (For fuller explanation refer to my paper presented at the "Prospects for the African Renaissance" presented in University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta)

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS ASKED BAFFOUR ANKOMAH, EDITOR OF THE LONDON, U.K BASED *NEW AFRICAN* MAGAZINE

1. Why do you not discuss some of the negative African cultural practices in your magazine and why do you defend criticism of the African culture?

ANSWER: Negativity is relative and ethnocentrism still permeate Western attitude towards Africa. The colonialists divide-and-rule created most of negative attitudes in the African culture, as one can see from historian William Lynch's work. The divide-and-rule used Africans against each other and resulted in the PHD, pull him down, syndrome. The PHD syndrome should be seen from historical context. The original African communal principle does not entertain PHD. African can solve the PHD problem by looking at the problem historically; it is from here they can solve it.

2. So far what has been the response of readers to your African-value based editorial policy?

ANSWER. Judging from our readers the response has been good, since it has refreshed Africans of their values and they have seen how good their values are. They have also come to see that most of history they were taught in their schools was half-truth. So far the response has come from east and southern Africa

APPENDIX TWO

When Journalism Collides with Faith

By Lewis Vaughn

The following article is from Free Inquiry magazine, Volume 20, Number 3.

Conspiracy theorists and paranoids like to posit the existence of forces in society that are both omnipresent and unseen. Such powers are supposed to be as mighty as gravity, pulling people into some dark, silent orbit. Yet no one ever seems to notice the slightest gravitational tug or-rarest of all-ever questions the desirability of the tugging.

All nuttiness aside, what gives me the willies about such fairy tales is that last part-the lack of a questioning, critical response to something that affects virtually everything that matters. This is the bad dream that free persons fear. It is the nightmare that a democracy is supposed to avoid. The forces that impel the citizenry are supposed to be visible. The bright beams of the Fourth Estate are supposed to help expose the covert powers so they can be weighed, debated, and directed.

Reality bites. In the real world, the nightmare of massive, unquestioned influence is real. One manifestation consists of the Fourth Estate simply ignoring—deliberately or otherwise—powerful, pervasive forces in public life while seeming to be preoccupied with them. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the case of religion, the grand gravitational force of minds and morals.

To be sure, there is a great deal of coverage of religious themes-the religious scandal (“Large Numbers of Priests Have AIDS”), the holy conflict (“Christians Attack Muslims in East Timor”), the grand pageant (“Pope Blesses Thousands in Jerusalem”), the Good Samaritan (“Local Churches Aid Flood Victims”), the demographics (“Mainstream Protestants Lose Members”), and the dance of science and faith (“Cosmologist Says Universe Has Divine Pattern”). But almost all of this coverage misses the point: It avoids serious discussion of what nearly everyone regards as the vital cognitive core of religion-the doctrinal beliefs.

Beliefs have consequences, as religious conservatives like to say. And religious beliefs are at least as consequential as those in politics, science, and social policy. Beliefs in all of these realms affect the quality of people’s lives. So examining the underpinnings of

beloved propositions is not just useful but necessary for any society that cares where it is going. Most people accept the legitimacy of journalistic inquiry into whether the program pushed by a politician is feasible, or if a major cancer study is credible, or if a policy designed to deter teen pregnancy works. But imagine the outcry if an honest, impartial journalist seriously asks whether a religious truth claim—a doctrinal or historical one that may affect millions of lives—is justified. In America, where the sea of faith washes in the streets (unlike Europe, for example, where such waters have long since receded), probing questions about religious propositions are taboo—and way below the radar of most journalists and the citizens they serve.

This, despite the obvious fact that, for people of faith, the hallowed, life-guiding beliefs matter at least as much as religious experience. For the faithful, all the other religious news—the little dramas of faith’s advance and retreat, of scandal and healing—have meaning only when they happen in the shadow of a sacred creed. I am not suggesting that we need a more overt kind of journalistic faith-bashing, in which one partisan slams another’s sacred beliefs because they are different. A few centuries of this type of bigotry is enough. And I am not referring to the “It is so!” “It is not!” style of religious “debate” that is as pointless as it is frustrating.

I am advocating a new kind of religion journalism, one in which the journalist follows wherever the scholarship leads, striving for the ideal of objectivity and fairness while reporting on the best thinking by the best scholars on every significant religious proposition. Like good science writers, these religion journalists would not only report the news but offer an assessment of what the experts know and don’t know given the evidence at hand. This approach could prove enlightening, in part because there is wide agreement among theologians, philosophers, and other scholars on many religious claims, and even a lack of agreement among honest inquirers can be more telling than many will admit.

Am I kidding? Am I naïve enough to think that religion can be tested by reason and reality as though it were astrophysics or Medicaid? After all, the received wisdom (among the public as well as most religion journalists) is that religion, influential or not, is essentially subjective, personal, and experiential. It is a secretive wisp of something that cannot—and should not—be rationally assessed at all. Most philosophers and Christian

theologians would disagree, as Thomas Aquinas did, asserting that reason can reveal truths about things theological without any help from revelation or faith. One would think that after hundreds of years of being wrong about facts acquired through reason and science (like evolution, racial equality, modern medicine, and the heliocentric view of the solar system), believers would be loathe to reject rational arguments that contradict their faith. Better to respect appeals to reason than to fight them. Otherwise one might end up having to apologize for dogma-inspired errors, as the pope did recently. If religion journalists assume that no headway can be made by critical reasoning against the tenets of faith, I suggest that they peek into a few contemporary journals in the field where intellectual progress is made in every issue.

Then again, some religion journalists may be painfully aware of the criticism of religious claims by scholars but dare not speak of it for fear of offending the people in the pews. Or they may assume that, if the intellectuals are out of step with the mass of believers, the intellectuals must be wrong. This is the kind of prejudice that lifted the cup of hemlock to Socrates' lips. Others would say that, if this new critical journalism is not epistemologically suspect, it is at least bad manners, corrosive bias, or even a hate crime. My, how far we have slid down the dark hole of political correctness, where criticism of ideas is a sin, and any query about the justification of dogma is viewed as an attack.

I recently met with several brave people who have seen firsthand what happens when this fear of inquiry is taken to its logical conclusion. They are Islamic dissidents who have criticized certain tenets of Islam for encouraging abuses of human rights, oppression of women, and violence against critics. In Islam, they are blasphemers or apostates. Some of them have been forced into exile; some are living under a fatwa (a sacred way to order a hit); all have suffered for daring to speak their minds. By speaking against what they think are religiously inspired moral outrages, they have offended people of faith. Should they be silent so as not to give offense? To assume so is itself a moral outrage.

Such widespread aversion to legitimate criticism of religious tenets makes the paranoid's case for him. Society is indeed permeated by a potent force that pulls everyone into a different path but is almost never called to account, and then only in hushed tones.

But publicly criticizing the articles of someone's faith is divisive, many would say. So is honest scholarship, public debate, and informed disagreement. They are all necessary to

democracy and moral progress. Perhaps one day journalists will regularly offer balanced reports on the historical accuracy of the Bible or the Koran, or on the logical inconsistencies of some church doctrines, or on scientific investigations of alleged miracles. And maybe, when society grows up, they won't have to fear the wrath of self-appointed Pharisees, a cup of hemlock, or a holy hit.

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APPENDIX THREE

MEDIA

The new African journalism

A new brand of journalism is emerging which places additional burdens on practitioners in Africa. Kofi Akosah-Sarpong reports from Montreal, Canada

THE PAN-AFRICAN WEEKLY'. 'Voice of the Continent'. Added to these rubrics under the logos of *West Africa* and *Africa Today* magazines are fast-emerging, continent-wide prizes for excellence in African journalism. A chemical change in Africa's journalism is quietly brewing. On the pages of the Nairobi-based *Weekly Review*, a leading magazine in the East African sub-region, the only international news is African news on the back pages. Newspapers across the continent, as in the case of *West Africa's* fresh editorial stance, are increasingly devoting a reasonable proportion of their space to wider African current affairs, as never before.

Perhaps the rising tide of crisis has been responsible; or perhaps a rising pan-African consciousness. But when all is said and done, a new wind is blowing in African journalism, an unprecedented development helping to foster continental understanding and education. This is a trend not much known a few years ago. In London and Paris, key centres in the earlier period of African colonisation, a plethora of publications oriented towards African issues is springing up each day. In London, for example, an increasing number of African-oriented publications, ranging from monthlies to weeklies, has become a common phenomenon over the past year, each outfit trying to outsmart and outthink the other, but all aiming for the continent's good.

As new winds of democracy blow across the continent, as sustainable development becomes the buzzword on Africa's streets, new demands are being placed on her people

- economic and social and cultural.~ Relatively recently, a view has emerged that there has been a complete failure of African politicians and their attendant military juntas, coupled with a common belief that the African academic has betrayed his people in propping up bad governments - not to mention assisting in the process of looting the continent.

"The African peoples' last hope is the

African journalist," says Kwame A.Q. Aboagye, currently a PhD student at Canada's McGill University, and formerly a lecturer at the University of Ghana's School of Administration. Aboagye's observation reflects current thinking across the continent.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, during the faltering transition government of former President Joseph Momoh's All People's Congress, the newly-established National Democratic Party (NDC) was irked when an international correspondent described the formal launch of the party at the Sewa Grounds in Freetown as a party mainly made up of academics. Top officials of the NDC telephoned the reporter to politely plead that the party had a broader base of support. "Only a few of us are academics. Most are technocrats," they chided the reporter, adding: "Academics turned politicians have spoiled the name of academics in general, so if people get to know that we are academics, we will have problems functioning as a political party."

As the emergent pan-African press reveals, there is an Afrocentric journalism emerging in which the world is seen from an African perspective. Added to this view is the growing number of African journalists based outside the continent reporting on world events to Africa - including Africans in the diaspora-seeing through an African's eyes. However, Africa's information is handled mostly by non-Africans, a fact that African journalists are strenuously trying to counter, as the various newer pan-African newspapers show. One sees this not only in government-owned press, but also in the fast-growing independent media across the continent.

As Africa boards the connecting train from one-party rule and military juntas to democracy, albeit tentatively, the African journalist is becoming burdened. He or she is now consistently seen not only as a reporter, but as a maintainer of the social contract, an entertainer, teacher, investigator, interpreter, researcher,

policy analyst, commentator, moralist, entrepreneur, referee, social conscience, a lawyer and a judge, director of civilisation, a spiritualist, unifier, social spectator and cultural engineer to the African people, all rolled into one. These huge demands, compared to those of other trades or professions, increasingly demands the skills of the most highly-educated African, sophisticated but simple, blended with a priest-like social empathy.

Before last December's general elections in Ghana, President Jerry Rawlings challenged journalists to be comparative in the African scheme of things in their editorial repertoire:

to stop reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and instead report on situations in other African countries. Reacting to local press reports about Ghanaian unemployment, the president declared: "Let the GBC [Ghana Broadcasting Corporation] broadcast to you situations in other African countries, and you will know that half of the population in Zimbabwe have no employment."

Increasingly, the African press, whether privately or state-owned, is being enjoined to foster intra- and inter-African understanding through its coverage of the continent's affairs. That is just the beginning. A time will come when the African media will however be challenged to cover those in the diaspora. This is already happening amongst other ethnic groups, and a few honourable exceptions such as *New African* have already taken a lead here for Africa.

For long, the African has not managed his information systems properly, letting non-Africans do so, to our huge disadvantage. This is reflected in Africa's marginalisation on the global information map. The Nigerian government, aware of this, recently staged an information conference of non-alienated nations to counter the Western world's grip on global information systems. After all, information is power, a weapon: it can be

sed for good or evil. Africans have largely ignored or do not know much about this. And the Western world, holding sway over Africa a information systems, has used them against us.

The mushrooming of pan-African publications is also slowly giving birth to an agenda for African public policy and leadership in African public thinking. The African journalist is being called upon to offer Africans another view, another vision and set of values. This is most daunting, in the face of the continent's scarce resources, low levels of training in most countries, and a hostile environment in which many people have no regard for the journalistic professions.

Daunting are the demands on the African journalist: he is expected not only to help nurture democracy and an open society into the coming millennium, but equally to help in no small measure in laying down foundations for a new African society. He or she must help build

democratic institutions and enlighten a people still mired in superstition. This demands a detribalised journalism, mixed with a high sense of morality, and the skilled use of the craft to minimise backward thinking and closed reasoning. Indeed, the African journalist is called upon to be a lightning rod.

A number of top African journalists have surmounted such hurdles in the past: Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe and Sierra Leone's I.T.A. Wallace Johnson, in their era, both helped shepherd the continent to self-rule. Those who come after them must assist in ushering in the new African society, much oiled for development, and lead the African to bathe in modern science and civilisation.

This in turn means that contemporary African journalists must broaden their outlook and philosophical goals, aiming much higher than those of the Azikiwe-Johnson era. This may entail torture,

imprisonment and even death, and demands a massive drive and strong belief in Africa's overall development. Failure of the African journalist to do this, or to develop appropriate communications responses to developments, will lead to the continent's further marginalisation in the global scheme of things.

This is a heavy task. But unbeknownst to most journalists, they are already on such a path, ploughing through the continent's rough terrain for sustainable development. As Africa joins the global information onslaught, for better or worse, her journalists will not only be called upon to articulate the continent's warmth, to disseminate news of all her beautiful diversity, but also to scrutinise the ways in which power is exercised, from the level of tribal leaders to that of our much-maligned politicians. **W4**

A continent in transition

African renaissance calls for new thinking and attitudes, but there are still in-built elements of old agendas and paradigms, writes Kofi Akosah-Sarpong in Montreal, Canada

RENAISSANCE HAS become a buzz word for the emerging new generation of African leaders - from South Africa's Vice-President Thabo Mbeki and Ghana's President Jerry John Rawlings to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. The term - now frequently being used not only by the new generation of African leaders but by African businessmen and women, policy planners, government officials - variously means rebirth; some sort of new paradigm - a new model, a new pattern. The new generation of African leaders use it as reality thresher, as a way of comparing the past with the present in order to chart the future in a moment of tumbling continental change. But despite its refreshing sparks, renaissance is part of the old African model; a tricky word in a continent struggling for balance in an age of transition.

However the term renaissance is useful, like a double-edged Hausa knife. The African continent has, over the years, been sorting itself into categories of New Africa and Old Africa, giving birth to what Thabo Mbeki proclaims to be the African Renaissance: a striking term which implies, firstly, that the current period of crisis must be seen as one of opportunity; and, secondly, that this is a moment which the New Africa must seize for its own advantage.

If the 1980s are said to be Africa's lost decade, the 1990s have become the era of transformation; of building a bridge between two eras: one that has disintegrated and another that is taking form - a renaissance holding firming up as we approach the new millennium. The New Africa, or the Renaissance, is what Africans are seeking these days--democracy, free market economies, regional and continental co-operation in all spheres of African life. As Mbeki told South Africa's Constitutional Assembly on May 8 1996, the aims of the African Renaissance are the encouragement of cultural exchange; the 'emancipation of African women from patriarchy'; the mobilization of youth; the broadening, deepening and sustenance of democracy; and the initiation of sustainable

economic development - a clear mixture of New Africanism and globalism.

Against that backdrop, contemporary African governments cannot proceed as before, along the lines of the old model. The long crisis of the African nation-states has been the struggle to emerge from the once powerful but unimaginative old model and find a new one. In this light, former Nigerian military leaders Yakubu Gowon and Muhammadu Buhari have condemned military rule as aberrant and abhorrent, and hope that African politicians will learn from past mistakes.

Among other things, the old Africanisms are symbolised by one-party rule, military coups, knowledge as opposed to information, witchcraft, unsafe sex, tribalism, genocide, civil wars, Mobutu, Banda, Samuel Doe, Idi Amin, Bokassa, apartheid, counter coups d'etat and mutiny, Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front, Guinea Bissau's conflagration, Unita and the Angolan civil war, the Polisario's Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (RASD) and corporate paternalism. On the other hand, the essence of the New Africanism is captured by the OAU's Salim Abmed Salim, Uganda's Museveni, Ghana's Rawlings, South Africa's Mandela and Mbeki, information, Nigeria's M.K.O. Abiola and Gani Fawehinmi; countries such as Mozambique (now Africa's fastest growing economy at 6-8 per cent per annum after years of civil war); bodies such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Ecomog, the African Development Bank; and terms such as accountability, pluralism and democracy.

However, the point must be made that the New Africa cannot be totally extricated from the old as the former has great lessons to draw from the latter. Take President Mandela, for example. In Mandela's mind, Old Africa and New Africa circle each other restlessly in a sort of Oedipal struggle. Mandela embodies New Africa when it comes to domestic issues like cultural exchanges, women's

emancipation, youth mobilisation, democratic growth and sustainable economic development. He adopts Old Africa tenets with regard to the question of reparations, slave trade atrocities, apartheid, unfair trade and colonialism. Museveni and Mbeki react similarly. Mandela created a shockwave at the Ouagadougou OAU summit when he challenged the OAU's founding principle by calling for intervention against tyrannical governments.

Throughout the continent, leaders are using Old Africanism to "unite the African family as an agenda for the new millennium". Sierra Leone's Ahmed Tejan Kabbah is an outstanding example of how fragile the New Africa can be; how quickly it can collapse if unresolved Old Africa issues are carried forward into the new thinking. The Rwandan genocide that claimed over 500,000 lives is, hopefully, one of the last spasms of the Old Africa. The Ogoni conflict in Nigeria, over natural resources, is one way that many of the battles of the Old Africa were fought. In the New Africa, in order to avoid Ogoni type conflicts, the issues ought to be democracy, human rights and accountability; all of this will enable the African people realise their full potential.

Gabon's Omar Bongo and Kenya's Daniel arap Moi are Old Africa. The trouble is that there is no New Africa for them to migrate to. Not now, or maybe not ever. Most of the conflicts on the African continent occur because most of the leaders cannot shed themselves of the Old Africanism. It is difficult to run closed nation-states on an increasingly open and shrinking continent (and planet). In Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda unwillingly made way for the New Africanism by opening the door for a breath of fresh air: he ditched the one-party model and allowed Zambians to participate in multiparty elections and hence true democracy. He was defeated in one of the freest and fairest elections in Africa. All of that now looks distant as Zambia struggles to grapple with New Africanism: the rule of law, civil society, democracy,

open market and accountability. Central African Republic's Jean-Bedel Bokassa took his impoverished country so far back into Old Africanism (with his dream of becoming Africa's Napoleon and his nostalgia for Empire) that the country emerged almost permanently impaired, as current President Ange-Felix Patasse has realised.

The blessing of the continent, beyond its natural resources and its unique culture, has been its capacity for self-transformation, for improvisation, for renewal, for rehabilitation, for resuscitation - a gift that Old Africanism has bestowed on New Africanism. Reforming leadership is seen in regimes which have come to power fairly recently, usually through guerilla warfare, in some of the continent's most traumatised states: Uganda under Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army; Eritrea under the Eritrean People's Liberation Front; Ethiopia under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front; Rwanda under the Rwandan Patriotic Front; the DRC of Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo; and even Mozambique.

This is a starting point for Africa's rehabilitation and reveals the continent's capacity to resuscitate itself from apparently terminal collapse, and provide at least some hope for projects of political reform which developed not from outside pressure but from new movements arising within Africa itself. As expected, the New Africanism has begun to inspire African minds with a new faith and new hopes. The new vision of a future rich in African renaissance is on the horizon, being translated into reality by the emerging crop of African leaders such as Tanzania's President William Mkapa, Museveni, Rawlings, Mbeki, Mozambique's Dr Chissano and Mandela. These leaders and their states are quickly gaining recognition in the eyes of world.

Mbeki's summing up of the spirit on the continent as "The African Renaissance" evoked not history on the march but new thinking, new ways of doing things, looking at what works, what's in and what's out. Mbeki's proclamation is an outburst of mental energy to promote a spirit of awakening in Africa in the 20th century, as we prepare for the 21st century. It calls for inclusion of the African peasantry, who have largely remained alienated from the state system. As regionalism

heightens and continental integration booms, the new thinking is that regional cooperation must become the watchword for the new millennium. One has gradually witnessed this sentiment with top world leaders like US President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac and US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin visiting the continent to prop up the New Africanism.

Mbeki, who has wide knowledge of the African continent - he was the African National Congress's pointsman in Nigeria and other African states - explains the New Africanism in this way: just as the printing press contributed to the transition from medieval to modern times, the way to Africa's development is via new technology, democracy, human rights, open-market reforms, local culture and tradition blended with the global culture. The African mind in order to explore and solve problems, must operate upon the models, the assumptions of the New Africa.

With the dawn of the African nation-states, former leaders of the Old Africanism (such as Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Guinea's Sekou Toure) thought that a one-party system and a centralised economy was the best way to solve Africa's developmental problems. It was a workable paradigm at the time but became the Old Africanism when the one-party system overheated, gasped for air and exploded into military juntas, dictatorships, human rights violations, civil wars, genocide, tribalism and declining standard of living. The Old Africanism became aberrant and abhorrent when the new generation of African leaders (worldly minded, well-educated and with global experience) propounded the New Africanism which preached that the African continent can only succeed by blending the local with the global. In Mbeki's universe, centralised bureaucracy and big government come under the Old Africanism. This idea took root at a moment when the African continent was infested with military coups d'etat and financial indiscipline, followed by the dawning realisation that governments do not have endless spending money, and that closed societies only self-destruct. Mbeki's African Renaissance envisages decentralised government, decision-making trickling down (if possible) to the level of the actual people affected. Programmes judged by output rather

than input-appropriation would provide results. The African Renaissance, or the New Africanism, represents what Burki Faso's president and current OAU chair Blaise Compaore, told the Ouagadougou OAU summit: "To redefine the organisation in order to cope with the economic and political pressures of globalisation."

Would the New Africanism fizzle out and retreat in the face of daunting problems, in a world becoming increasingly sophisticated as it shrink into a global village due to technology? Mbeki and a host of other Africa leaders and intellectuals think not. The current of crises must be seen a window of opportunity, a moment which Africa must turn around its advantage. The remarkable resuscitation and rehabilitation of Africa's oldest Republic is illustrates this, considering the fact that as at 1990 there was neither a Liberian state nor viable prospects for its restoration. Somalia is gradually treading the same path helped along by Gadaffi's mediation and crisis-management efforts. In the New Africanism the African state and its people rely on negotiations with in the political and economic elite rather than outright military and police repression. And so warlordism gives way to tolerance.

The New Africanism is not disturbed by the ghost of the Old Africanism; it look upon the continent with sharper eyes unsentimentally. The various 'vision' philosophies and programmes of Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique and Cote d'Ivoire reveal these new eyes of the continent.

'Tricksters' such as foxes often appear in the stories of indigenous African traditions. They are, paradoxically, transformative beings. The New Africanism is a fox that accommodates many ideas - be they decentralised governments or multifaceted societies.

It represents the resuscitation of the ole for a better functioning new. Getting to the New Africanism may mean wading through terrible crises as have Nigeria Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda, Congo, Mozambique, Namibia. It leaves Africans pondering whether the African Renaissance is really a very Old Africanism or very New One.