

When Will Tomorrow Come? Cultural Discontinuity and Africa's Desperate Future⁺

Chris Okechukwu Uroh*
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

For Africa, the twentieth century was a huge paradox: It was a century of "independence" when hope was rekindled for a people who had suffered the deprivation and humiliation of slavery and colonization that reduced them to "subjects" (as against citizens) in their own lands. It was yet a lost century in that Africa spent a major part of it prosecuting wars at the expense of the much needed development of the continent and its people. Even today the war rages on. This paper is an attempt to answer some questions that have become germane as Africa trudges along in the one-year old millenium: What is the place of Africa in the "globalization train"? Will it speed past Africa or will Africa be taken along? What role will Africa play onboard? A co-captain or a mere passenger at the mercy of the captains? What options do the continent and its people have in the present dispensation? The paper contends that the cultural dislocation suffered by Africans is a critical factor in the generation of the African crisis and therefore suggests that until Africa takes cultural regeneration more seriously, development of the continent would remain an agenda for some distant future. The paper tries also to set the agenda for the "rediscovery of the continent."

Keywords: Africa, culture, politics

⁺ This is a revised version of a paper with similar title presented at The Review Of African Political Economy (ROAPE) Millennium Conference, with the theme "Africa: Capturing the Future," University of Leeds April 28-30, 2000.

* **Correspondence:** Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
Email: Chrisuroh@hotmail.com

Capturing the Present Predicament

Africa today continues to be symbolized in the literature and other media of mass communication, with the most pejorative epithets in the lexicon of contemporary social commentary. The African state is, for instance, derided as *the lame leviathan*, *the swollen state*, *the soft, predatory and patron-clientalist state*. The state in Africa is also the *rent-seeking, overextended, parasitical and perverted capitalist state*; just as it is equally labeled the *unsteady and underground state* (Mkadawire 1998).

The picture usually painted by these *nomenclatural verbiage* or what Thandika Mkadawire has rightly described as “lexicographic acrobatics,” is that of a *hopeless* African State steadily “moving toward final collapse, oblivion and self-destruction.” (Ibid.) To scholars and public commentators who share, and have orchestrated this view, the only thing that is certain about the African State today is its inevitable collapse. Some have in fact, already *celebrated* the “collapse” of the State in Africa, stating that what is momentous is how to *put things right back* (Zatman 1995).

Candidates usually invited to validate this *Afropessimism* include the killers of Kigali, the fleeing refugees of Freetown, the agonizing youths of the Ogoni land, the bombers of Bujumbura, among others, in the ever expanding frontiers of war and human decimation in Africa. Abdel Nasser (1954) described the Egypt of the early 1950s where he made history as the first soldier to turn his gun against his state and sack a government in Africa, as *the scene of a strange and stirring commotion*. Today many would affirm that Nasser spoke for the Twenty-first Century Africa. And they may well be right. Has Africa not become famous today mainly for its somewhat permanent economic crisis, its ethnic massacres, its rampaging army of occupation and its swelling rank of blood-thirsty dictators (Mahieu 1992:331). Are we Africans not “presently caught in a web of social relations, economic conditions, and political predicaments that portray [our] future in rather bleak terms?” Is it surprising therefore that we can only contemplate the African future with trepidation.

The foregoing calls to the fore a cluster of questions which will engage the attention of this paper: Is there anything inherently wrong with Africa that the continent has remained immobilized in a milieu marked by rapid and progressive transformation in other parts of the globe? Is Africa caught in the web of conflicting ideologies of development from which it cannot extricate itself? Could Africa be a victim of ineluctable constraints and, or conspiracies as some have posited? In short, is Africa doomed? Or should we hope for better days to come? (Uroh 1998) When

will that *glorious* tomorrow come for Africa? Will the African star ever shine again? How soon?

I shall interrogate these questions on the understanding that the study of the past and the present are intertwined, and more importantly, that it would be somewhat a luxury, albeit worthless, if the knowledge of the past does not illuminate the present realities whatever these realities are made of. The resort to African past here, is essentially therefore, to establish "how our (present) troubles are related to the past and see the line along which we may progress towards the solutions of what we feel we choose to be our main task" (Masolo 1980: 418). Unless as a people, we Africans develop a sense of direction which is grounded on the proper understanding of the real issues on the continent's sociopolitical *cum* cultural landscape, we may not have basis for action, and that consequently the resolution of the African crisis would remain the agenda for some distant future. This is a luxury which we cannot yet afford.

Furthermore, it is the contention of this paper that the critical factor in the generation of the African crisis is the *cultural dislocation* suffered by the Africans. This dislocation occasioned by Africa's checkered history; a history of slavery and the *devaluation* of the African personality; of migration and the detachment from cultural roots; of colonization and the displacement of the Africa's traditional values and above all, of the "delegitimization" of the Africa's traditional institutions and the attendant cultural amnesia.

My conception of *culture* here is rather broad as it embraces the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, meaning, beliefs, values, religion, concepts of self, the universe, and self-universe relationship; all acquired by a large group of people in the course of generation through group striving (Porter 1972). Culture, in this sense, "covers modes of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions, and beliefs" (UNESCO 1982). Thus defined, culture is the *locus of value priorities, indicating the behaviors of a given social group and, hence, the choices among the many possible futures*. It is the totality of the experience of a people that have come to condition the way(s) they do things; way(s) which sometimes distinguish them from *other* people.

Because culture encompasses the totality of a people's heritage in economics, politics, the sacred/secular, the arts, the sciences and so on, it is then the opaque lens, so to speak, through which people perceive and interpret reality. It defines a people. It is the umbrella against the ravaging sun of value infiltration, albeit, corruption. It is a source of protection.

It gives them the meaning to life. It is as important to the people as their lives because life itself is almost meaningless outside the cultural orbit. As a result when the cultural identity of a people is "challenged by values different from their own," people "strive to find an identity to which they can remain steadfastly faithful in an attempt to recover their security."

By *cultural dislocation* in view of the foregoing, I shall mean a disorientation or "de-linking" of a people from their heritage in arts, sciences, politics, social norms, religion, in short from their "accustomed" ways of doing things. The picture is best appreciated by imagining a fish out of the water. This, no doubt, leads to a distortion in the world outlook of the people. Like a fish out of the water, the people are left to gasp for breath, almost ceaselessly. This, I want to submit, is the situation, which most Africans find themselves in today. The African, in other words, is today caught between a past s/he cannot recall, a present s/he is ill-equipped to understand and a future s/he can only contemplate with desperation (Uroh 1998b).

The African encounters this crisis on many fronts: At the level of the economy, it manifests in almost irrecoverable underdevelopment. Africa is about the only continent which, as a result of the disadvantageous economic linkage established in the colonial days, that produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce. Kwame Nkrumah (1974:1) saw it coming while many were dancing to the "conga" of independence in the sixties. His words of wisdom: "Africa is a paradox which illustrates and highlights neo-colonialism. Her earth is rich, yet the products that come from above and below her soil continue to enrich, not Africans predominantly, but groups and individuals who operate to Africa's impoverishment". (I shall return to this later.) On the political front, we encounter the problem in the form of what I have elsewhere referred to as the *crisis of political legitimacy* or better still, *crisis of the state*, resulting from the mutual loss of confidence, between the citizen and the political authorities of the African State. The realm of religion has not been left out. Here Africa experiences cultural dislocation in the form of the "heathenization" of the African religion and the consequent "demonization" of the "African God."

Cultural dislocation has equally turned Africans, in the words of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1974), into a people who have "lost confidence in themselves." Here lies the dilemma of a people whom, according to Mokwugo Okoye (1980:1), now "break the traditional kola nuts in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord." As if that was not enough colonization in it delegitimization of the African heritage, led to the *vernacularization*

of the indigenous African languages and the consequent promotion of colonial (foreign) languages as the official media of commerce, public administration, the production and consequent, consumption of knowledge in Africa. The result has not only been the continued alienation of the elite (both political and intellectual) from the masses of the people who continue to conduct their own business in the now devalued indigenous African languages, but more importantly, it denies the people, the very agent of development, access to the knowledge daily produced by the African intellectuals. This is what I had elsewhere described as alienated discourse in Africa (Uroh, 1994, 2000). Here, we have a case of the "falcon" and the "falconer" trying to communicate in languages that are not interpersonally intelligible. They simply do not and cannot communicate, one to another. I will have more to say on this later. It suffices at this point to note that the consequence of all this is that the African today is bereft of the self-esteem, which s/he requires for the reconstruction of the continent that has become germane today.

Interrogating the Present Africa

There is perhaps no argument over the fact that the ship of the African State went into troubled waters almost immediately after the "flag independence" and that for the major part, it still remains therein. No amount of *intellectual make-ups* or propaganda can possibly negate this fact. It is no longer enough to blame the *negativized* African imagery on the prejudiced symbolism of overzealous Western commentators. *Mobutu* and *Banda* were as real as *Abacha* and *Bokassa*. They were lived realities; far from being mere creatures of the imaginative mass media, African or Western. They were part and parcel of Africa's ponderous baggage in the rather tortuous journey through time. We cannot deny them. What we Africans should perhaps legitimately demand is *proper* representations of issues especially the acknowledgment of their *occidental* genealogy and continued complications.

Let me start with what appears most compelling in the African crisis: The socioeconomic condition of the continent. That Africa is the most backward continent in terms of development, is no longer a matter for debate. At the close of the twentieth century, at least 32 of the 47 the world's least developed countries were in Africa. Even then Africa is not just the poorest continent; it is also the only one that is backsliding. Between 1980 and 1990 Africa's average growth rate was put at *minus* 2.2

percent. Africa's foreign debt which ballooned from thirty billion US dollars in 1962 to seventy two billion US dollars in 1982 had, by the turn of the decade, in 1990, risen to some embarrassing three hundred billion US dollars. This, instructively, amounted to about 102.3 percent of the continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for that period. A continent of many paradoxes. Africa has the highest birth rate but at the same time its death rate is unequalled in the world. At least, 1000 children die daily from curable disease on the continent. Yet, this figure does not include those who are daily dispatched in the course of prosecuting the many civil wars and communal clashes getting famous for their criminal recruitment of minors as kid soldiers. And then, the AIDS pandemic which every day add to the number of widows, widowers and more pathetically, orphans in the continent.

Coupled with all this, are the twin problems of unemployment and under employment. Experts are agreed that "Africans have the lowest incomes in the world. In real terms, their purchasing power has been on the steady decline since the beginning of the independence era" (Prah 1996). To compound this, with growing land degradation, deforestation and progressive destruction of wildlife in the rural areas, starving villagers have invaded the cities in search of the elusive *golden fleece* which long ago took flight of the African city. With more people than it can accommodate and more mouths than it can feed, the cities in Africa, "slummed" leading to the now pervasive *urbanization of poverty* in Africa. With the urban center turned into a marketplace of possessive individuals whose sole goal is to cheat their fellows as a way of securing their own safety, the rank of urban miscreants, the shanty dwellers, armed bandits, rapists and so on, continues to swell by the day (Uroh 1999).

So when the World Bank in a 1991 Report noted that Africans are "almost as poor today as they were 30 years ago," it was just a restatement of the obvious. And Samir Amin (1990), one of Africa's foremost economists could not agree more. "If the 1960s were characterized by the great hope of seeing an irreversible process of development launched throughout what came to be called the Third World, and in Africa particularly," Amin noted, "the present age is one of disillusionment."

Weighed against the background of the *expectations* of the African people on the eve of what has actually, proved to be mere *flag* independence, one would understand better the air of restlessness and disillusionment that enveloped the continent at the turn of the twentieth century. Gideon Were (1983:2) captures these expectations this way:

To the masses it must have meant the end of hard times and uncertainties, and the beginning of the golden age. At last land, food, employment, social justice, liberty and happiness would become a reality. Bread and butter would no longer be a permanent source of anxiety and tension. No doubt educational and health facilities would now be improved radically in quality and quantity.

J. F. Ade Ajayi (1982) had in an earlier article aptly titled, "Expectations of Independence," equally presented a graphic picture of what the people expected to gain from independence thus:

Insofar as they appreciate what was involved in the independence movement, their basic expectation was to see an end to unpredictability and irrationality of the white man's world. Without the dubious advantages of Western education, they rejected the white man's culture, and for as long as possible, stuck to what they knew...their notion of freedom was not an abstract ideal, but a catalogue of specific wants: freedom from unjust and incomprehensible laws and directives; return of their lands; freedom to be left alone to live their lives and seek their goals, especially in regard to land tenure and local government grouping that affected historical relationships. These wants developed and became specific with each New Hope and each disastrous frustration. Soon, expectations came to include improved standards of living in housing and clothing, greater returns for their labor, better transportation for exporting and marketing their surpluses, education as a means to social mobility that would ensure a better life for their children and an adequate water supply, electricity, health care facilities and other such amenities of life.

By implication, political independence was expected by the masses of the people, to "usher in a new era of basic rights and freedom long denied under foreign or settler rule." These expectations could not have been misplaced. The nationalists *a la* Kwame Nkrumah raised the people's hope: *Seek ye first the political freedom and the rest shall follow*, Nkrumah had urged Africans, with the promise that at independence *both economic and social development will follow*. Today however, Africans have neither political freedom, in the true sense of being the determinants of their own sociopolitical destinies nor do they have economic and social development. The consequence of this, all over Africa, has been the same: sociopolitical instability. Claude Ake (1994) explains it this way;

Economic stagnation, the fiscal crisis of the state and intensifying poverty have caused the collapse of social and physical infrastructures and created a great deal of stress as well as proliferation of violent death by starvation for some. All over Africa (therefore) ordinary people are in revolt against a leadership whose performance has become life threatening.

In short, by the end of the last century, the political authority of many African states had lost the moral basis for the exercise of powers. Thus force and political repression became a way of maintaining the *status quo* by those in power. It was at this point that the group that had the monopoly of force, the military, took over governments. The military thus stepped in, so it thus seemed, to fill the legitimacy gap created by *bad* civilian leadership (Horowitz 1982). Abdel Nasser (1954) said much of this when justifying the 1952 military coup: "It was not the army that determined the role it was to play in the course of event. The reverse was nearer the truth... It was events and their development that determined the army's part in the struggle for the liberation of the homeland." The question as to whether or not, *political soldiers* have fared better in office than their civilian counterparts is not so much of my concern here. The evidence of the failure of political soldiering is as glaring as the crisis in Nigeria today, the war of attrition in Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc. Let me note however that it was when the political legitimacy of the state had become questionable in the post-colonial African state that the citizen decides to seek and have secured social expressions in their primordial groupings (be these religious, ethnic, tribal or linguistic). And for this reason many Africans have become patrons of these primordial cleavages and champions of their parochial interests.

The African State has failed to imbue in the citizen what Christopher Clapham (1992) calls "positive," as against "negative," view of the State. In other words, rather than see its political authorities and agencies as providing "the essential foundations for the pursuit of public benefits, namely, peace, welfare, and the opportunity for the individuals to pursue their own happiness," the state in Africa represents for the citizen, an institution that only provides "the opportunity for some individuals or groups to pursue their own interests by oppressing and exploiting their fellows." (Ibid.) It is therefore perceived by the people as *a nuisance to be avoided in their daily struggle for survival*. This then explains why Africa ended the last century and entered the present one with an unprecedented increase in the number of ethnic militia; *rebels* pursuing parochial goals at

the expense of their states. The first casualty of this situation is development. For as Mugenyi (1987) brilliantly puts it:

When the political music played, progress fell rapidly. Services collapsed. Infrastructure suffered. Incomes tumbled. Taxes increased. Supplies fluctuated and vanished. The cost of living jumped. Bureaucratic bottlenecks multiplied. Efficiency nose-dived. Foreign debt mounted. Self-reliance wobbled badly. Disillusionment set in... The country simply found its overall performance suffering multiple failure. And mark this, the political music played on.

Though this observation was made against the backdrop of what happened in the years immediately after the *Arusha Declaration* of 1967 in Tanzania, it captures the reality that endured in Africa of the twentieth century. It is the same that ushered the continent into the new millennium. But is there a way out? What has the future got for Africa? In answering this question it is important to reiterate the fact that the problem here is that of institutional legitimacy or lack of it rooted as I said earlier in the cultural dislocation of the continent. "Those of the past have lost their containing power. Those of the present offer little save confusion. Those of the future are yet to appear"(Davidson 1974).

The Quest for Africa's Future

A concern for the future is basically a quest for what is not yet, what probably would be or what ought to be at some later time. But in projecting into the future, it is helpful that we first understand the present and how the present is affected by the past. In short the concern for the future entails treating the *past* and the *present* as prologues to the future (Uroh 1998b). When we contemplate the future we do so to enable us to avoid on one hand, our past mistakes and on the other, consolidate our accomplishments.

In line with what has been said so far, there is no doubt that in considering the future of Africa, we must take the future of the African culture seriously. Put differently, the future of Africa is parasitic on the future of the *African culture*. By this I mean that whatever happens to this culture determines the fate of the African continent and its people.

Also, any serious consideration of the African future must acknowledge and make allowance for two factors. The first is the *postcoloniality* of

the Africa's present predicament. (I want to also quickly note a point which is not always taken into consideration in the narrative of the African crisis, and this is the fact that most of the problems plaguing the continent today, at least in their present magnitude and dimensions, never existed in the pre-colonial Africa. They are mostly the products of the cultural discontinuity occasioned by the colonial conquest). The second factor is the *extent* and *limit* to which we can reasonably go into the *past* in our quest for the resolution of the present crisis. The question is: How much of our past can we invoke to illuminate the future? While we must, as a matter of course, bend backward that is, search our past in our quest for the future of the African continent, it must be acknowledged that however glorious this past must have been, some aspects of it, have become irrevocably lost on us. We must, in other words, concede that "the rape of Africa has taken place (that) slavery, colonialism, the invasion of technology, Western educational patterns, Western religions and political systems have shaped our historical situation" (Ruch 1974:13-14).

Having implicated culture in the African crisis the solution that I shall proffer is equally a cultural one. There are two dominant positions in the discourse of the cultural dilemma of Africa. There are on one hand, those who call for a return of Africa to the glorious past. Here we see a kind of a re-affirmation of negritude in the Senghorien sense. What the Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame Gyekye, among others, calls *sankofa*. The second view is that which sees the African heritage as too dated for the *modern* times. It urges its displacement by Western culture.

I will not take side with any of these positions, what Africa needs, in my view, is rather a *cultural syncretism*, which synthesizes the positive values inherent in all the contending cultural forces in contemporary Africa. Such synthesis would reproduce not exactly the past, which Africa has left behind nor would it be a wholesale domestication of Western values with which we are daily bombarded through the satellites and *cable networks*.

I shall explain my choice using three major issues in the contemporary Africa's cultural space. I shall therefore consider the *future of the African economy*, the *future of African politics*, and finally, the *future of African language*. The latter, I must state, is very crucial for Africa's quest for self-definition even though the language question keeps on being treated as a marginal discourse.

Let me start with the consideration of the future of the African economy. As I said earlier, Africa's economy presents a paradox. Its driving force is externally induced. Milton Obote made this point when he noted thus: "Our economy is the economy of a poor country that must

look for markets abroad, and the commodities that we produce we sell mostly abroad in Western Europe. And when we want to buy raw materials and plants from Western Europe, they also fix the price. So heads we lose, tails we lose." I have noted elsewhere how this economic dependence has been further worsened by the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) being urged on African states by the West. If anything, what SAP has done in Africa is to further entrench the economy of African states to the developed economy of the West (Uroh 1998, 2001). But what option does Africa have in this matter? There are many answers that contend for attention here. There is for instance, the position that Africa should make the best it could of the globalization that is taking place. On the other hand, there is the suggestion that we should *de-link* from the advanced capitalist economy to which we have been tied but are ill-equipped to compete favorably, close our borders if possible and develop on our own terms and at our own pace.

There is no doubt that both positions have their merits. However, rather than take sides it is my candid opinion that what Africa needs is a combination of the two approaches, the kind that would, literally speaking, allow us eat our cakes and still have them. One way of achieving this is launching anew, regional economic blocs within Africa. This of course means a lot of things. It means for instance, the loosening of the bolt at our international borders so as to ease movement of humans and services across the continent. I therefore suggest a twenty-first century Africa's economy which is founded on regional economic bodies and strengthening of those already in existence. In a sense, this is like returning Africa's economy to the era of economic cooperation among African societies of the pre-colonial days. (I recall here the Trans-Sahara trade for instance.) This option is chosen in place of the nature of the current *globalization* which would only further entrench individual African countries, into the capitalist contraptions. If therefore there is a period when the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, the Southern African Development Corporation, SADC, etc, should be taken more seriously by Africa, it is now. Taking such sub-regional bodies more seriously would mean that there would be a firm grip on the African economy by Africans. Then the globalization proper can take place through a process by which Africa can negotiate its entrance and maintain its presence in the international "marketplace" through such sub-regional economic bodies. The truth is that no African country on its own may be able to survive in the rather chaotic capitalist system of the ongoing globalization.

On the *future of African politics*, I want to state that the dominant mode of politics as well as its underlying philosophy are detrimental to the quest for social order among the disparate groups that were, as a result of colonization "chaotically crammed" within African states. To start with liberal democracy which has gained currency in Africa today, is premised on *majority* rule. The problem here is that in societies where differences are deep-rooted and issues perceived mainly from sectional perspectives, a political system which bases decision-making on majority views alone tendentially puts the numerical minority perpetually outside power. Democracy would then become to such marginalized groups a "tyranny of the majority." And when a group is "excluded from a share in power," and consequently from "a share in benefits," they become aggressive and work against the existing order. This is the development that has kept many states in Africa on the boil. It therefore follows that a viable political philosophy for Africa is one which does not create a permanent opposition in the numerically marginal groups within the state. Our democracy should therefore avoid the zero-sum situation by emphasizing *consensus* rather than *confrontation*.

Let me state here that the idea of consensus does not rule out the possibility of disagreement, even if only at the initial stage of decision-making. It is only people who had initially disagreed that can, in fact, reach a consensus. However, the essence of consensus is to go beyond conflicting positions in such a way that all the parties involved "are able to feel that adequate account has been taken of their points of view in any proposed scheme of future action of coexistence." The merit of consensus as a principle of decision-making lies in the fact that decisions reached by consensus are morally binding on all parties involved. This principle, I must remind us, is not new to Africa. It was the principle by which our various societies were governed in the days preceding colonization. The only new thing that we shall add is the electoral process which liberal democracy has brought about.

Now, the *future of the African language*, is central not only to the quest for Africa's self-definition but more importantly, to the question for socioeconomic *cum* political development of the continent. It is however interesting to note that perhaps, until quite recently, the language question has not been given serious attention in the discourse of the African crisis by African scholars and governments. The primacy of language to the African quest hinges on the fact that as the instrument for cultural communication, the language of a people is their "collective memory-

bank”(Wa Thiong’o 1981). It is their reservoir of “past achievements and failures [and] forms the basis of common identity.” (Ibid.) Thus, language “provides humans with their intellectual bearings in the production and reproduction of social life”(Prah 1993:73). Thus, the development of any culture becomes a function of the growth of the language with which such culture is communicated and cultivated. It is therefore clear why denying a people their language, is tantamount to “uprooting that community from their history.” Now, because Africa societies are still predominantly *non-literate* (in the Western sense), “the spoken language remains the only real linguistic foundation of culture.” In other words, Africans are still locked on to the “oral” tradition or verbal rendition of culture.

The language problem is further compounded in Africa by the linguistic polarization of the society, between the elite (be these the political, intellectual, business, etc.) who have the historic role of fashioning the new Africa in the making and the masses of the people (who are the instruments and targets of development policies). While, as I said earlier, the elite conduct their business in foreign languages, the masses of the people communicate in the indigenous languages. What we then have is a situation where to quote the poet, the falcon and the falconer cannot communicate. Therefore, beyond the fact that the young generation of Africans are denied access to their history, culture and values as they inhere in their indigenous languages, development is hindered because even among the adults there is no communication, in the true sense of the word, between the people and those who are in the position to change the destiny of Africa.

My candid opinion is that Africa does not have many options in this matter. To start with, we have to admit the reality of the foreign languages. To a very large extent they make international relation easier. But this does not in any way make them a substitute for the indigenous African languages. A language policy for Africa in the new millenium is one which emphasizes conscious efforts on the part of African governments to accord indigenous African languages the pride of place within the continent by making sure that, among other things, the study of these languages are made compulsory the way some of the foreign languages are in Africa. There must, in other words, be a deliberate policy to *devernacularize* the indigenous African languages. To encourage the use of these African languages, government business should, as much as possible, be carried out in African languages.

There is no gain in restating the fact that Africa trailed the rest of the continents into this millennium but nothing says we should remain the last at the close of the twenty-first century. The time to start the process of changing things for the better for Africa is now.

References

- Ake, C. 1994. *Democratization of Disempowerment in Africa*. Port-Harcourt. Centre For Advanced Social Science.
- Ade-Ajayi, J. F. 1982. "Expectations of Independence." *Daedalus* 3(2).
- Amin, S. 1990. *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of Global Failure*. Tokyo, London, and N. J. United Nation University Press and Zed Books Ltd.
- Clapham, C. 1992. "The African State." in D. Rimmer (ed.) *Africa, Thirty Years On*. London: The Royal African Society.
- Davidson, B. 1974. *Can Africa Survive?* Canada: Little Brown.
- Mahieu, F. G. 1992. "Why Can't the North Understand the South?" *Dissent* (summer).
- Masolo, D. A. 1980. "Some Aspects and Perspectives of African Philosophy Today." *Africa* 35(3-4)(Sept/Dec.)
- Mkadawire, T. 1998. "The Social Science in Africa: Breaking Local Barriers and Negotiating International Presence." *Southern Review* 11(9).
- Mugenyi, M. 1987. "Development First, Democracy Second: A Comment on Minimalist Democracy." in W.O. Oyugi and A. Gitonga (Eds.) *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa*. Kenya: Heinemann.
- Nazzer, A. 1954. *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. Cairo: Information Department.
- Nkrumah, K. 1974. *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: Panaf Books Limited.
- Okoye, M. 1980. *Embattled Men: Profiles in Social Adjustment*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Porter, R. 1972. "An Overview of Intercultural Communication." in L. Samorea and R. Porter (Eds.) *Intercultural Communication-A Reader*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Comp. Inc.
- Prah, K. 1993. "African Languages, the Key to African Development; a Critique of Ideas in Development Thinking." in Margareta von Troil (ed.) *Changing Paradigms in Development-south, East and West: A Meeting of Minds in Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- _____. 1996. "The Crisis of Neo-colonialism in Africa and the Contemporary Democratic Challenge." in H. Assef and G. Wachira (Eds.) *Peacemaking and Democratisation in Africa*. Nairobi and Kampala, East African Educational Publishers.
- Uroh C. O. 1994. "Colonialism and the Language Question: A Reply to Geoffrey Tangwa." *Quest: International African Journal of Philosophy* 8(2) (December).

- _____. 1998. "Situating the Crisis of Development" in C.O. Uroh (Ed.) *Africa And The Challenge of Development: Essays by Samir Amin*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- _____. 1998b. "Cultural Syncretism In Africa." *Futures Bulletin* 24(1): 12-15. Philippines: publication of the World Futures Studies Federation.
- _____. 1998c. "Reclaiming Africa's Past for the Future: The Challenge of The African Intellectual," in Aduke Adebayo And Segun Odunuga (Eds.) *Literature, Ideology and Society: Essays in Honour of Abiola Irele*. Ibadan, AMD Publishers and Department of Modern European Languages, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- _____. 2001. "The Irresponsible State and Its restive Society: Neo-liberalism and Social Movements in Nigeria" paper presented at the Conference on *Regionalization, Social and Political Movements for Alternatives to the African Crisis*, Dakar, Senegal April 9-12, 2000.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. 1981. "Return to the Roots: National Languages as the Basis of a Kenyan National Literature and Culture." in *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann.
- Were, G. 1998. *Leadership and Underdevelopment in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Zatman, W. I. 1995. *The Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Colorado: Lynne Rienne Publishers, Inc.

