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Demystification of Life and Religion: A Leeway to African Development

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ABSTRACT

The African developmental state has become a critical concern of not only Africans but all peoples in the global community. The point at issue is not that African leaders at various historical epochs have articulated philosophies and reasonable roadmaps to fast-tracking African developmental vision, however, in spite of all the efforts, it is observed that Africa is still at the lowest lung of world developmental indices. Now the million dollar question that agitates the minds of scholars and students of developmental studies in Africa is, 'what is the real cause of African developmental stagnation?' Here many causes ranging from colonial exploitation to corruption and leadership ineptitude have been proffered. As good and reasonable as these propositions may be, this paper maintains that they are not the prime cause of African developmental dilemma, they are rather the secondary causes. This paper is of the opinion that African developmental problem lies in the nature of African epistemology and cosmology. It notes that African epistemology is organized around supernaturalism; this knowledge type stifles creativity and enslaves humanity to its lethal dictations as it limits man from attaining selfhood and self dictations and governance. This paper maintains that if African must attain her developmental dreams, she must first of all liberate herself from the powers of her religion and her worldview of life but as long as the current African epistemology continue to be her source of knowledge system, then she will continue to maintain her slavish status in the global community. Therefore, to change this status, this paper calls for the demystification and de-spiritualization of life and religion by the Africans.

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Introduction

The Problem of African development has become both epistemological and existential concern of both African leaders and scholars. Africa, despite her efforts in participating in the trends of modern globalization on equal footing and sharing the benefits of global integration is noted to be at the lowest ladder of the global family as mere observer or rather bystander (J.Okolo 2011: 69), However, by whatever matrix one uses to measure development either in social, economical or technological, Africa by no means could be considered as attempting to venture into any developmental constituent. Ban Ki- Moon, the UN Secretary General, underscoring the basic fact of African inability to secure a place in the developmental chart of the global village, bemoans:

Africa is endowed with abundant material resources and many African countries have recently experienced sustained economic growth, however, the continent is still lagging behind other regions in attempting to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) – the set of ambitious global target to slash poverty, hunger and this is as a result of lack of capacity to transform much of its raw materials into finished products. Hence, Africa continues to export its resources with little or no value added, leading to loss of job opportunity.(1-2).

Against this backdrop of Ban Ki-Moon's lamentation, Jacques (2012) observes that the major setback on African development anchors on poor technological capability. He thus observes, 'Poor technological capability remains one of the major constraints to African sustainable development. The lack of deliberate learning and implementation of technological policies that are in line with domestic economic problems and

the challenges of globalization are overwhelming'. (1-7) Though Jacques (2012) observes that Africa lack deliberate and adequate technological policies that will fast-track her developmental aspirations yet, it is a general aphorism that science and technology are permanent lexicon in the African development discourse (Ogbu 2004:3) Notably, no speech in any political or academic gathering without the mentioning of the importance of Science and technology in African development

In fact, 30th of June every year is African's science and Technology day. This is a day set aside when Africa and her citizens celebrate their efforts in scientific and technological development. This day was chosen at the 48th Ministerial Conference of the Organization of Africa Unity/African Union (OAU/AU) on June 30 1987 (Ogbu 2004:1). On this day all Africans should mark, not only their achievements in the field of science and technology, but also what Africa has failed to achieve in this area. In the words of Ogbu (2004), '...But for what we have not achieved, the missed cues, the missed inventions, the lack of supporting environment for science and technology to thrive and our general lack of interest in science and technology(1-2).This celebration is not meant to be a mere fanfare but a time out to reminiscence on African developmental failures occasioned by epistemological unfriendliness resulting to African general lethargy towards science and technology

Thus, African general apathy towards science and technology has been observed as the bane of her development. Hence, we found ourselves inextricably caught in the webs of the age of science, with records of many and unimaginable breakthrough and this day may pass without Africans taking notice of it. African without mincing words, have surrendered to

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the rest of the world in science and technology, which have become the propeller of modern globalization. For example, the internet is facilitating rapid opening up and integration of national economies. It is the engine of economic liberalization and associated development in international trade.

As mere consumers of science and technology, Africans are simply fascinated by gadgets, the latest equipments, the speed of these equipments, tools as 'toys' for accomplishing our daily duties. As fascinated as Africans may be about the tools and gadgets, they never stopped to think and to understand the science behind the tools. The question therefore is why are Africans so keen on the latest gadgets, without being keen in improving their science and engineering schools?. Why have we not paused to ask, why do we score high on the barometers of consumption and low on the barometer of production?. Even as we enjoy the benefits of science and technology, we never paused to understand the threats these technologies pose to our national and regional existence.

However, many have blamed African non-development and technological snag on the policies of African leaders, lack of investment on research, lack of motivation for research and lack of capacity building. These may be true to some extent but these are not the main issues mediating our wrongful position in the development indices of the global village. The main issue which this paper is posed to discuss hinges on our epistemology and worldview. This assumption is based on the fact that ones understanding of this life, God, this world and hereafter determine ones progressive and adventurous heights in the material existence. Africa, just like the Europe of 16th and 17th century is a religious centered society. Thus, African basic epistemology is governed by the other-worldly and thus life is seen sacrosanct and not material. To the Africans, life merely has eternal worth and as such the other-worldly directs and influences our activities in this world. It is against this assumption that this paper is poised to reconsider how African religious worldview has adversely affected her developmental pace. It therefore suggests the materialization of life and religion, that is, to demystify life as the only panacea for African developmental challenge.

Africa concept of Life and Living

The Africans, contrary to the modern/scientific understanding of life, which defines life in a materials sense, have a unique way of understanding the meaning of life. For the African, life does not end in death, but continues to another world. Life to the African is simply a continuum. The concept of 'life' and 'death' are not mutually inclusive concepts and there are no clear dividing lines between human existence as a dynamic process involving the increase or decrease of 'power' or 'life force' of living and dying and there are different levels of death (Bosch 1975:13). Njoku (2002) agrees with the above definition of life when he cites Mbiti thus

Mbiti believes that there is no need of compartmentalizing Africa world to see which side is philosophical, religious or social. Religion, according to him, permeates all aspects of the life of the Africans; religion is discerned in terms of belief, ceremonies, rituals and religious officials (21)

It is against this backdrop that Temple (1906-1977) reduces the entire system of Africa philosophical, religious and social system to one word "force" According to him, force is a category of being, it is not an attribute (Njoku, 2002:16) Accordingly, Temple notes

We (westerners can conceive the transcendental notion of being by separating it from attributes "force" but the Bantus (Africans) cannot. Force in his thought is a necessary element in

being and the concept of "force" is inseparable from the definition of being. There is no idea among the Bantu of being divorced from the idea of force. Without the element of force, being cannot be conceived (17)

In this direction, Temple considers force as being behind as it also moves every living being. In Africa, values are judge in relation or proportion to how they strengthen or diminish the vital force of the individual. Thereunto, in African cosmology, there exist only one reality (the sacred or the religious). Unlike the western world, where there is a sharp distinction between the secular and the sacred. In African cosmology, there is no such thing as the secular sphere and even if there is such a notion of the secular, it is controlled by the sacred. African gods therefore does not live in temples, shrines, woods and holy places, but in the souls of the adherents. Therefore, African Gods are not separated from the life realities of the African people. Gods play vital roles in every department of African people's life, including socio-political and economic life (Okoro: 2011:3327-333).

It is against this backdrop that Buthelezi (1987) writes:

It is often rightly been said that the African has a sense of wholeness of life. The traditional religion was characterized in the motif of the wholeness of life. In fact, it is right to say that religion and life belong together. Far from being a department of life, religion was life. As a result of this, traditional religion lacked institutional symbols which mark it off from the daily life (95).

In this regard, Temple, using the Bantu cosmology succinctly describes African life as not only a constitution of vital force but also as sacred. He further obviates, when Africans encounter misfortune, they simply interpret it as a diminution of vital force". Hence illness and death do result from the activities of external agents, persons, things or circumstances that weaken people. This because the agents are considered as possessing greater life force, thus, death does not alter or end the life or the personality of an individual, but causes a change in the conditions of existence (Anderson 2012, 1-8).

In this sense, though Africans dread death, yet they perceive it as the beginning of person's deeper relationship with all creatures and also the complementing of life. The beginning of commendation of life for the African is to become an ancestor after death. Hence, Iwuagwu (1999) substantiates this assumption when he announces that the belief (in ancestors) is strong in the great religions of a given race. Ancestors are alive elsewhere. Ancestors, though dead are regarded as members of their families, kindred and clans and communities (Okoro 2011: 337)

The ancestors are both spiritual guides and elders of the kindred, which they had belonged while alive (Iwe 1991:12). This notion informs and influences African thought pattern to accepting that the living and the dead together form the one community, whose members are mutually interdependent upon each other. This relationship according to Okoro (2011) is to make sure that ontological harmony, which the entire cosmos needed to sustain itself is highly maintained (336). The ancestors as senior members of their various families, clans and communities, provide the spiritual link for the desired harmony and as such they are not aliens to their families and communities (Okoro, 2011:338). Hence, it is believed that the ancestors' posses the same emotions and sentiments as the living members of the communities do (Dapamu 1991:21).

So, in African worldview, human life and relationship is not considered from the material realms, but also and most

importantly from the spiritual realms. (Okoro: 2011: 338) Therefore in African community, there is no separate day of worship, because the whole rhythm of daily life is continuous liturgy that permeated such common place thing as eating, drinking, lovemaking etc. The community of fellowship between the living and the dead is analogous to the interplay between the natural and the supernatural world. (Buthelezi, 1987: 95). In African worldview, life is such as whole that not even death could disintegrate it. Here, it could be noted that Africans do not regard death as a point which marked the termination of fellowship among those who had been in communion on this side of the grave. Sustaining the foregoing assumption Raboteau (1980) writes

Those who are dead are never gone. They are there in the thickening shadow. The dead are not under the earth; they are in the trees that rustles, they are in the woods that groan, they are in the water that runs, they are in the water that sleeps, they are in the hut, they are in the crowd, the dead are not dead. Those who are dead are never gone, they are in the breast of the woman, and they are in the child who is wailing and in the firebrand that flames. The dead are not under the earth, they are in the fire that is dying, they are in the grasses that weep, they are in the whimpering rocks, they are in the forest, they are in the house, the dead are not dead (3).

It is in this regard that Okoro (2010) maintains that Africa input force or vitality on natural phenomenon like rivers, rocks, woods, mountains, forest etc. These natural phenomena acquire their vitality through the inhabitations of ancestors. Therefore Africans locate force/vitality in all things in the universe and this understating of the attitude of this natural phenomenon defines and organizes the African epistemology (Okoro 2012:27) It is on the score of this traditional African epistemology that Africans create a sense of solidarity between the living and the dead through the belief in the active presence of the creator of life. Njoku (2002) reiterates further "At every specific human level, life has a communitarian spirit. God and humans form a relationship of communion in which humans' commune with God through enacted divine acts (166) Accordingly, Africans believe that life is not a property of the one who has it, rather it is a gift and to participate in it is a rare privilege that must be handles with caution. In consequence therefore, Njoku (2002) avers ... human beings participate in our life, which is a horizon of community of life which forms the basis of family, social, political, religious institutions and customs... It is to be pointed out that for example, life for the Bantu communities is not just a 'being' but a "living" that finds in the dead, the living, comprising the endogamous and exogamous families (167).

The presence of (God) the creator of life, is an existential experience or the part of man. Thus the validity of his presence does not depend on the extent to which it was conceptualized. It is as one participate in life that one apprehends God's presence (Buthelezi 1987:96). It is therefore this notion or concept of life that informs Africans to maintain a sacramental character of life. Thus, under this given structure of human existence, Africans receive the gift of life, which continually puts them in the state of indebtedness to that which is outside and beyond them - (God) Here, Africans discover that they cannot by-pass what is around them and what is already given to them in life in order to be at the point where God can bestow his gifts to them e.g food, children, health, protection etc. Life therefore becomes a place of rendezvous with God. Life becomes alive with God.

Accordingly, this understanding of nature of man's existence in the material universe has much socio-ethical

implications for the Africans. In the first instance, African world being predominantly a religious one, makes Africans hold both nature and human life as a sacred given. Therefore, Africans believe that human life and natural environment are intrinsically inseparable from one another and both are under the general supervision and oversight of the supreme being (God), the multifarious spirit and the ancestors, who represent their families in the guild of spirit (Okoro 2011:343). Notably, such a religious epistemology have put restrain on Africans from violating the sacredness of human life and human freedom and also from violating and/or degrading the ecological system, for Africans believe in the unity of all creation and as such to dislodge one is to dislodge all.

The Implications of African Concept of Life to African Development

It is truism that African world is a religious one. Hence Africans whether at home or in Diaspora are religious persons. Therefore, it is difficult to separate an African from his religion or his God(s). Consequently, African epistemology defines man at the centre of all spiritual and material arrangement of the ordered cosmos. Temple lends credence to this assumption when he asserts, using the Bantu example,

Bantu ontology differentiates being in hierarchy, beings with greater force rank higher in the hierarchy. God is the highest force. Being higher up in the hierarchy strengthens or enfeebles those lower down. Accordingly, the created universe is centered on human forces, hence, the hierarchy of being is largely anthropocentric (Njoku: 2002:18)

Okoro (2010), also supports this assumption when he maintains that in African cosmology, Man occupies a central position in the scheme of things and all things are measured in relationship to man. Accordingly, man has an inseparable relationship with both spiritual and material forces. Metu (1991) describing man's relationship with God maintains "man viewed from his origin and final destiny is best understood in relationship to Chukwu, God his creator. Man comes from God. He has a definite mission to fulfill on God's plan and will eventually go back to God" (53).

Notably, Africans understanding of man is ontologically based; hence Metu (1991) further avers that man is best understood in relation to the entire cosmic order (53). Therefore forces or vitality become central in African cosmology. Forces or vitality becomes the defining paradigm of the African culture and also a matrix of social development. Thus, because in African worldview (Bantu), force moves all living things, hence values are judged according as they strengthened or diminished the vital force of the individual (Njoku 2000:7). In the words of Temple

Every Illness, wound or disappointment, all suffering, depression or fatigue, every injustice and every failure all these are held to be and spoken of by the Bantu as diminution of vital force. Illness and death do not have their source in our vital power but result from external agent who weakens us through his greater force. It is only by fortifying our vital energy through the use of magical recipes that we acquire resistance to malevolent external forces (Njoku 2002:17)

It is in recognition of this basic fact of African category that we can agree with Mary Kingsley, a British anthropologist of the 20th century that Africans are religiously incurable (Awolalu and Dapomu 1997, 43) African locates forces in all things in the universe – the woods, stones, trees, forests, water, moon, stars, suns, etc. Thus in order to attract the benevolence of these forces, Africans approach them with awe, reverence and worship. This attitude to nature or rather natural phenomenon

has great effect on African epistemology. Thus, Africans instead of confronting and conquering nature and the forces within it, revere and worship it. This attitude runs contrary to the demands of the scripture (bible), where we note in Genesis 1:26 the word of God and his great expectations and tacit command to man thus

And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God blessed them and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every thing that moveth upon the earth.

However, the African attitude towards nature, contrary to the scripture may not be judged as fiat disobedience to God or irrationality on the part of Africans. It may be considered as a reasonable attempt to maintaining and cohering the ontological harmony between matter and spirit as they found them in the material universe. Though Africa locate force/vitality in the natural phenomena such as rivers, springs, trees, thunder etc, they actually do not accept that these phenomena generate vitality on their strength but acquire their vitality through their association and relationship with the spirit of the ancestors (Okoro and Njoku 2010:12) The implications of the Africans relationship with their ancestors, which informs their epistemology and worldview, is that interfering in the course of nature like destroying a forest or interfering with the course of running water or mining or drilling activities in the land – is invariably interfering with the peace, serenity and privacy of the ancestors, who are considered to have real determining effect on the fate of the living.

Africans therefore attribute vitality to both animate and inanimate things in order to secure protection, mercy, favour of the gods and the ancestors in this material existence. It is this close affinity between the Africans, the Gods and the ancestors with the material phenomenon that governs the antics of the African person. Thus, African morality being a religious one, become not only slavish but also enslaving. This made the Africans to be mentally and morally enslaved as they depend on the dictate of the mindless phenomenon and the dead members of the community and fatal fate for their existence.

The consequence of organizing the African life and development within such a fatalistic epistemology is African's scientific backwardness even in the 21st century. African scientific backwardness has made the developed world of the West to regard Africans and by extension the black race as being without any capacity and propensity for creativity, rationality and ingenuity (Okoro, and Njoku 2012:12-34). It therefore suffices that if African must attain the desired scientific and technological development and take her place among the comity of other developed nations of West and East, her idea about religion, philosophy, ethics, and morality must be redefined. This project is only possible if the definitions start with African epistemology, which is the principle of knowledge and knowing reality.

The new definition which religion, philosophy, ethics and morality must undergo will be able to set Africans free from all forms of slavery, including attachment to their ancestors and the God(s) and in fact every form of supersensible. The new definition of these moral imperatives should be able to grant Africans the master morality, with which she should be able to define herself positively in the world of science and technology. Africans must eliminate in her epistemology all ideas of

supernatural being that unduly interfere in the world of humans either for good or for bad. Africans must erase the idea of living a new life in the life after. Thus Africans should consider all eschatological lessons that she has been conditioned to accept as erroneous thing – a bye-product of human primitive stage of development. By doing so, Africans just like her western counterparts must redefine life only in material terms without spiritual or sacred dimensions or reference Thus life has material relevance and nothing more. This new approach to epistemology, will springboard African nations to scientific and economic development, which is the heart beat or yearning of world citizens. However, it shall be with a great prize. Nevertheless, the West paid the prize to get to where they are today in the developmental scale, we shall therefore consider the steps they took to materialize life.

Western Concept of Life and its Adaptation as Leeway to African Development

... it is this radical revolt against the traditional theism that gave birth to a new approach in handling religious matters. The effect of this paradigm shift is that God who was once in control is now relegated to the background and as such becomes irrelevant. Therefore the society no longer needs religion to explain the world and to support humanity. Therefore what runs the world of the 20th century and explains it for majority of people is no longer religion but practical and material services (Okoro 2009: 404-429, Bonhoeffer 1971:8)

Before the 19th century, Europe just like Africa was a religious enslaved nation. Religion (Christianity) organized her epistemology. It was this time in history that was regarded as the dark ages. However, in the wake of the 19th century, regarded as the century of great scientific achievements, their thoughts on religion had to undergo material rebirth. This material rebirth of religion occasioned redefinition and new approach to understanding man's relationship with the world. In consequence therefore, Chine (2012) avers; that at the wake of this new definition, nearly every religion posits some sort of hidden immaterial realm, which exists behind the invisible, physical and material realms which we live. Thus we are often supposed to be partaking in the immaterial realm because our nature and personality are really defined by an immaterial, immortal soul. This immaterial realm is also considered as being higher and more important than the material one because it is the realm in which gods live and which we are destined to inhabit after our physical bodies die (1-7)

He went further to enunciate that however important these beliefs may be to the theists, that there are no solid and verifiable evidences that suggest that such realms ever exists and such propositions are ever true. On the contrary, Chine (2012), maintains that everything we do and everything we learn point to the conclusion that all of those claims are completely false and instead that the following are true – life is material and natural, we do not have anything like an immaterial or immortal soul and an immaterial disembodied minds like god(s) as supposed, are just is not possible, when all available evidences point away from a particular position, that does not necessarily mean that it is false but it is unreasonable to believe it.

It is such revelation that redefined the place and role of religion for the modern man. Notably, before this time, the church had interpreted the bible with a view of retaining control over the people. In this period, the church assumed that Christ had given the key of the kingdom of heaven to St Peter and through him to the church, who thereafter was bequeathed with the Grace and power to assign people to either to heaven or hell. (Eberhard 2000:17). Hence the church had unlimited powers

even beyond the grave. Nonetheless, with the coming of age of man, consequent upon the development of material sciences, man was equipped to break away from the prison and imprisonment of religion. Bonheoffer (1997) reiterated the fact thus:

... with the increasing growth of history, man desired to free himself from the fetters of religion and become autonomous in the world come of age... man therefore discovers a new law of which the word deals with itself in science, politics, arts, ethics and religion. This means that for most people the working hypotheses called "God" is no longer necessary. In science and arts, the battle is lost. God has no place (22).

It is on this note that Kaufmann (1975) citing Ortega equates man with stone as he postulates

The stone is given its existence; it needs not fight for being what it is – a stone in the field. Man has to himself in spite of unfavourable circumstances that mean he has to make his own existence out of every single moment. Man has an abstract possibility of existing but not the reality (153)

Against this background, Ortega maintains that man must earn his life not only economically but metaphysically. It therefore suffices that life has no spiritual dimensions within the western ontology. Hence man is considered as an entity that makes itself, which traditional ontology only stumbles upon precisely as its courses was drawing to a close and which in consequence gave up the attempt to understand: the *causa sui*. With this difference, that the *causa sui* had only to exert itself. Being the *causa sui* of itself and not in determining what self it was going to cause. Accordingly, the self had to begin with a self previously determined and invariably, consistent to the infinity (Kaufmann 1975:155) Man must not only make himself the weightiest thing, he has prepared himself in such way that he can determine what he is going to be in life. Man therefore becomes the *causa sui* to the second power.

The sum of the European epistemology is that man is free from God and should celebrate his independence. In fact, man must condition his mind to accepting that God never either existed in the first place with the result that man is simply a material being with nothing spiritual about his life. Therefore, the idea of God is simply a mental construct invented to satisfy the epistemology of the weak and the powerless, who cannot confront the horrid situations in the material universe. (Okoro and Njoku 2010:12-34) Hereto, religion was regarded as a mere illusion and deception of the age, which man must overcome in order to be fully human in the material world.

Reiterating on Nietzsche's own contribution to materializing the world and human life, Okoro and Njoku (2010) writes

It was the scientific spirit of the age and its attendant secularism that influenced Nietzsche greatly that he began to think on how to eliminate God or its idea in the minds and schemes of Europe of his time. The scientific and secular spirits that have taken over the centre stage of European thoughts was quite poised to challenge, confront and ultimately destroy the moral and religious foundations, which was hitherto the foundation of European civilization. The creeping in of the secular spirit made it a sort of general aphorism that religious foundation with all it has to offer, has to be eliminated, if Europe must attain proper development (12-34).

Against this backdrop, Omeregbe (1991) underscores the salient point of this postulation, when he says, God is dead and the man is free, man is liberated from the oppressive divine commands and prohibitions (170). The news of the death of God

should excite and elate mankind, since the death of God means the freedom of man. Since God limits man's freedom, destroys his ingenuity and creativity and consequently makes him a perpetual slave in the world he is meant to be a master (Okoro 2010). Religion (God) stifles intellectual pursuit and destroys the best part of man. People who otherwise would have been great, many were destroyed by Christianity of the time. Religion (God) aims at destroying the strong, at their breaking spirits, at exploiting their moment of weariness and debility, at converting their proud assurance into anxiety and conscience trouble. Religion knows how to poison the noblest instinct and infect them with disease (12-32) It is in the light of the same spirit that Bonheoffer Dietrich, a German pastor of the 20th century, writes "The ancient covenant is now broken in pieces, man at last knows that he is alone in the unfeeling intensity of the universe, out of which he emerged only by chance, neither his destiny nor his duty have been written down, the kingdom above or the darkness below, it is for him to choose (25).

The influence of these works on Europe of the 20th century and beyond is quite overwhelming. Thus Europe had a great paradigm shift in the area of epistemology and this fast-tracked them in the technological, biological and environmental and materials sciences. Here, man having achieved self awareness and freedom, began to think himself as the determining factor in the universe. He determines his values and his future. He no longer relies on God or religion for any of his actions or inactions. In the words of Okoro (2010)

From this point, man experiences himself as determining values and does not need approval from anybody. He determines what is harmful. He knows himself as that which accords honour to things. He is value-creating... in this sense; master morality is the full recognition that oneself is the measure of all things (12-34)

Summarily, Nietzsche representing the spirit of the age, maintains that the values that man creates are in true sense, transcendental thus providing the horizon for a completely western exegesis (Capra, 1982:34). With the death of God, for Nietzsche, the western Horizons becomes paradoxically historical. It affords the West the realization that morality is man's own creation and not anything divine, for such concept as God is a mere illusion. Therefore, man from this perspective became the literal creator and or evaluator of value structure that always operate within the human environment (Brain 1995:1-7). Consequently, it is only within the human value structure that things become intelligible and engenders peoples thought and language from the very human perspective. For Nietzsche, values penetrated facts, norms and engender the people's worldview to such an extent that they are transcendental. Like a semantic cage, outside of which nothing makes sense except reason. (Okoro 2010:12-34, Solomon and Clancy 2005:8).

Accordingly, with the death of God, man becomes a celebrity and a Lord unto himself. God and the institution that represented him (Religion) becomes demystified and consequently no longer needed in the scheme of things in modern Europe. With this demystification of God (Religion) and human life, the modern European man makes adventure, confronts, conquers, dominates and summarily rules his world. He subjugates not only the entire ecosystem but other human beings and used them to satisfy his insatiable bestial and banal natural desires. The atmosphere and the biosphere are not spared of the adventurous spirit for self gratification in the name of scientific discovery (Okoro 2010:12-34)

Now considering the present state of African nations in the relation to socio-economic, political and scientific development,

which could be described as being in the lowest states, it then means that if African states must attain any reasonable development and participate actively in the world community not as slave and servant, she must demystify her concept of life, her idea of religion and redefine her philosophy and ethics, morality and epistemology. The new definition must be able to give her right perception of life as merely material with nothing sacred, with no future, no other worldly and eternity, noting that the only reasonable thing about life is achievements made on the material realms only. The demystification of life and religion, will aid Africa to liberate herself from all forms of slavery and slavish inclination towards eternity and religion Through this means, Africans must eliminate or demystify the idea of supernatural that unduly interfere in human affairs. Thus supernaturalism will be converted to naturalism. Here God becomes man and man becomes God to himself and his environment. This is the only antidote to African development.

However, if Africans continue to maintain the sacredness of life and religion, it then means that she would continue in her slavery conditions and without hope of an emerging future. She will be incarcerated the more in the prison of rituals and religious rites, the celebration of the gods, the ancestors and other quasi deities. Africa may continue to spend her fortunes in preparing for the next worldly existence as evidenced in elaborate marriages and burials. Notably, terrorist's attacks, suicide bombing, witchcraft and wizardry are activities informed by religious epistemology, which projects the other-worldly in favour of material existence in the here and now. Africans even in the 21st century have continued to remain slaves to religious personages and institutions that such determine the course of life and events for the average African man and this situation has stifled the rational part of Africans and hinder them from critical adventure to discover their destiny in world.

Conclusion

Africa, like all other nations and continents has struggled with the issue of development and underdevelopment, having come out from the bondage of human slavery. However, it is still heart breaking that in spite of all her efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development, she has remained at the lowest lung of global development ladder and as such her development is not insight. It is noted in the papers that her problem is slavery, this time not human slavery but another kind of slavery, which is more devastating than human slavery. This slavery is self imposed through Africans worldviews and the epistemology that organizes such worldviews. Africans have fettered themselves in mental nudge. Thus, they constructed sacred realms, which become the abode of the God. This impugn on their freedom to develop. This paper therefore, concludes that if Africans must develop, she must cast off the chains of religion by demystifying life and religion. They must see themselves as merely material beings in a material universe without eternal destiny and the only hope of life is the achievements made in the material realms only. The only personal immortality is the legacies one leaves behind in the work of arts, science, technology, governance etc. and not the survival of the soul after dead.

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